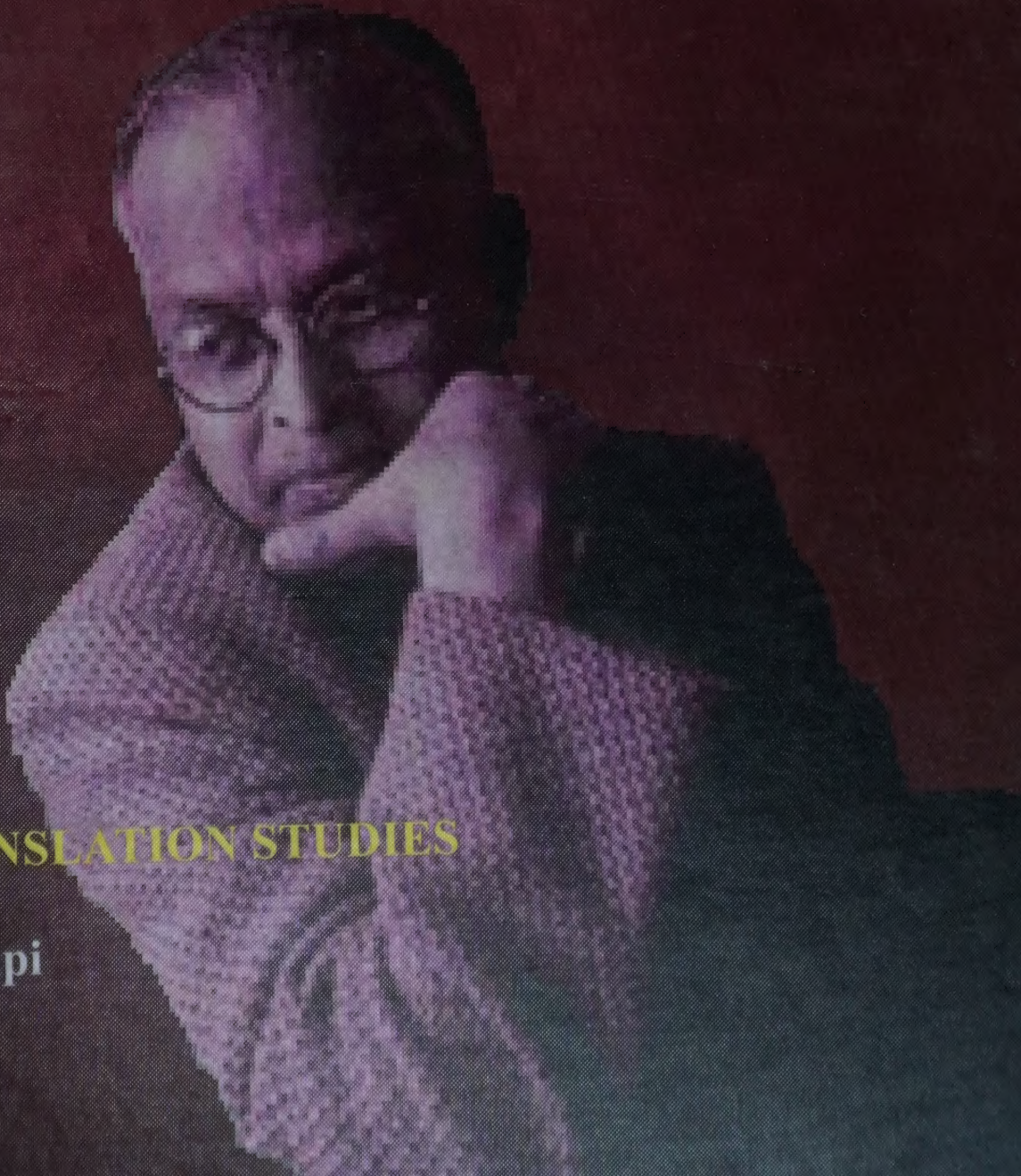


THE PROJECTION OF NATIVITY IN R. K. NARAYAN'S NOVELS

A Thesis Submitted for
The Department of Translation Studies, Kannada University, Hampi
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature

Researcher
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Register No - 1011

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSLATION STUDIES
Faculty of Language
Kannada University, Hampi
Vidyaranya - 583 276
2017

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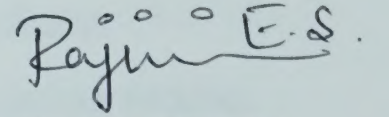
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DECLARATION

I, **Rajini E.S.** do hereby declare that this thesis entitled '**The projection of Nativity in R. K. Narayan's Novles**' contains original research work done by me in fulfilment of the requirements for my Ph.D. degree in English Literature from the Department of Translation Studies, Kannada University, Hampi and that this report has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma in this or any other institution. This work has not been sent anywhere for publication or presentation purpose.



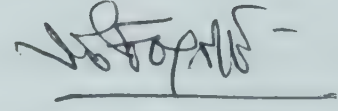
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Researcher

Date : 29/07/2017

Place: Vidyaranya

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled '**The projection of Nativity in R.K. Narayan' s Novels**' is a record of bonafide study and research carried out by **Rajini E.S.** under my supervision and guidance. The report has not been submitted by her for any award of degree or diploma in this or in any other University.



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I dedicate this thesis to my beloved Atthe & Mama— Shashiprem.

Rajini E.S.

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CHAPTER: 1

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the relentless propaganda of international cooperation in the huge mass media is too concentrated on that ordinary newspaper reader and visual media viewers are likely to believe that nativism means narrow mindedness. The emergence of scientific age, space age, the age of growing cultural cross fertilization. And so on, has given us the feeling of landlessness, of free floating above this planet called earth.

Generally, being native means being attached to a particular place. In fact, if everything is already native, then what is the need to do discuss nativism? But when non-native, alien, imported values, language, and cultures coming from outside threaten native values, languages, native cultures, communities have to become *nativistic* in order to survive. Basically, nativism in entirely self-manifest as in the plants and trees that patiently grow and live on their own soil. But there are critical moments when cultures which challenged must become aggressive. *Nativeness* implies the natural state of sustaining the status quo. *Nativism* on the other hand, is the assertive expression of the *nativism*, the establishment of one's right to exist as one is.

In India there is ample evidence of genocides in our history and mythology. Even more horrifying was the system enslaving a whole community by birth or by confining them to a life of slavery by erecting the invisible prison of untouchability. Yet there was an interminable influx of several races, which spread themselves throughout the vast expanse of the sub-continent. We find two mega-systems formed to absorb these races, with their gods, religious customs and garment styles, and vary eating habits. One was *Jati*, the caste system and other was *desh*, that domiciliation. In Indian history and geography, any person could retain his identity with dignity once his place was fixed by the coordinates of race and region. Even now, unless the caste and region of a person is known, it is impossible to identify him properly. Out of the interbreeding of these two main

systems a vast spectrum of subtler sub –system appeared, but no one can acquire a stable identity without these two broad markers. Even those groups who do not accept these broad systems are also identified by the very same systems.

The important thing worth noting here is that nativism has an inclination for shaking hands with the traditionists and the retrograde, but it is also equally true that nativism is the only weapon in the hands of the oppressed culture, the weapon which is capable of throwing out the dominant systems of foreign influence which erode capable native systems. In Indian context it can be said that our long and rich history can bestow upon us the necessary and effective means of coping with the new situation.¹

In this background we will go through with some important events by seeing history how nation built and how India sustained by retaining its nativity by alien force after independence. This introductory chapter examines the concepts of nation (native land) and nativity, India as a nation and framing of Indian nationalism, the significance and sources of rationality along with the nature and scope of Indian Literature. This chapter highlights the major writers and their role in constructing the image of the region and the nativity through novelistic discourse in English.

The term ‘nation’ (Native land) has been evaluated on a variety of dimensions either on the philosophical or political ground. There is variety of terms for what constitutes a nation. The symbolic dimensions of the nation are national song, national anthem, national emblem, national epic, national flag, national currency, national symbol, national calendar, national game, national river, national bird, even national flower and tree. The strands like ethnic, cultural or identity group or multi-nationality lead towards nationalism. Nevertheless, the idea of the nation (native land) is an altering or unsteady construction. It can be in the form of movement or response to the issues of local land.

Here are some of the views of eminent critics of the concerned field through which one can find a range of nuances and aspects of the term ‘nation’:

The French Orientalist *Ernest Renan* in his speech on ‘*What is a Nation*’ (March 11, 1882) explains that things like race, language, material interest, religious affinities, geography, and military necessity are insufficient to construct nation. Nations are unsteady formations. Man is the major source in shaping the nation in terms of what he defines as ‘spiritual principle’: “A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle”. *Renan* views two things which constitute this soul or spiritual principle: the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories and present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of heritage that one has received in an undivided form. The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice, and devotion. He considers heroic past, great men, glory, etc. as the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. While summing up his views, *Renan* shows that man is a slave to neither of his race nor his language, nor of his religion, nor of course of rivers nor of the direction taken by mountain chains. A large aggregate of men, healthy in mind and warm of heart, creates the kind of moral conscience which we call a nation.²

Timothy Brennan in “The national longing for form” while commenting on modern collapsing of the two concepts of nation and nation-state observes: As for the ‘nation’ it is both historically determined and general. As a term, it refers both to the modern nation-state and to something more ancient and nebulous- the ‘natio’- a local community, domicile, family, condition of belonging. The distinction is often obscured by nationalists who seek to place their own country in an ‘immemorial past’ where its arbitrariness cannot be questioned.³

Brennan considers nationalism as imperialistic formation which could receive its further affluence through dominance: Even though [nationalism] as an ideology... came out of the imperialist countries, these countries were not able to formulate their own national aspirations until the age of exploration. The markets made possible by European imperial penetration motivated the construction of the nation-state at home. European nationalism itself was motivated by what Europe was doing in its far-flung dominions. The ‘national idea’, in other words, flourished in the soil of foreign conquest.⁴

The founding of one's national identity is possible only through nationalism. The individual identity is measured through political principles. Political status judges one's identity. Anthony Smith in *National Identity* observes that nationalism is a political ideology that involves a strong identification of a group of individuals with a political entity defined in national terms, i.e. a nation. In the 'modernist' image of the nation, it is a nationalism that creates 'national identity'.⁵

Homi K. Bhabha in his 'Introduction [on]: narrating the nation' considers the emergence of the nation from traditions of political thought and literary language. He is of the view that the concept of a nation serves as a symbolic force, a system of cultural signification, the representation of social *life* rather than the discipline of social *polity*, emphasizes this instability of knowledge. Nation to his sense is one of the major structures of ideological ambivalence within the cultural representations of 'modernity'. Nations are 'narrative' constructions born out of diverse cultural amalgamation which he terms as 'hybridity'.⁶

It has also been argued that the nationalistic mindset develops fixed and rigid framework of ideology which mars certain fundamental ethical values. *Arnab Baul* in his article on "*The Idea of Nation / nationalism in Tagore's Poetry*" says that the concept of the nation was in vogue in the ancient worlds of Greece and Rome, but the English were the first to form an idea of nationhood. Nevertheless, the idea of the nation received its theoretical stand in the late eighteenth century and in course of French Revolution. While judging his views *Arnab Baul* cites *E.J.Hobsbawm's The Age of Empire* that if, on the one hand, it suggests "a readiness of the people to identify themselves emotionally with 'their' nation and to be politically mobilized" on the other hand "nationalism... attacks democracy, fight socialism and undermines pacifism, humanitarianism and internationalism; it declares the program of liberalism finished".⁷ It is argued philosophy that humanitarianism or the concept of 'universal man' is the true identity in the contemporary era; on the contrary one confines his individual identity while seeking nationalism. Though, the attitude to consider nationalism

mere hostile form or threatening to democratic frame cannot be fully acknowledged. National values amalgamate within the space of Universalism, has also its wide appeal in the present global set-up. Though it should be free from any sort of bias and prejudice and tackled with due care. The quest for nativity and representing the indigenous nature is considered the result of imperialistic movement. The colonial hegemony inspired the native people to construct their nationhood. *Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin* in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* observe on 'nationalism' that one of the strongest foci for resistance to imperial control in colonial societies has been the idea of 'nation'. It is the concept of a shared community; one which Benedict Anderson calls an 'imagined community'.⁸ Which has enabled post-colonial societies to invent a self-image through which they could act to liberate themselves from imperialist oppression. The concept of nationalism according to Franz Fanon's dictum that 'a national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence'.⁹

Pramod K. Nayar in *Postcolonial Literature An Introduction* observes that the postcolonial writers, especially the first generation from 1950s and 1960s, were conscious of their role in nation-building, since the nation is also a cultural construct built out of and upon the artistic, folkloric, theoretical, and philosophical discourses about the nation. The contours of the nation-geographical, economic, political, and cultural- have been a continuing theme in postcolonial writing. Our land is, in fact, a project, as postcolonial literatures seek to erase their colonial pasts. Resisting and rejecting the Western constructions of their native lands, as primitive, savage and ancient, postcolonial writers seek to retrieve a pre-colonial past that would help them define our land, and, more importantly, project a destiny, a future. That is, they seek to reconstruct our land without the frames of reference used by the colonial masters.¹⁰ Looking at the Indian context, writers like *Raja Rao* attempted to redefine the nation at the initial stage without a colonial frame in his *Kanthapura* (1938). Raja Rao has applied *puranic* technique of *Sthala*

Purana of Sanskrit *narratology* in place of western concept. By rejecting the western concept of history as the linear progression of events in a chronological order Rao has reinstated the Indian concept of treating the time in its totality which defines the present in relation to the past. He has converted the 1920s Freedom Movement into reenactment Sita-Ram Ravana and also the myth of Krishna. Hence, Rao situates the novel in historical time. Gandhi has been introduced as an *avatar* to destroy *Adharma* or British rule in this paradigm. It has also been viewed that the political independence has inspired the task of nation building. The idea of nation bears certain territorial imperative. The factors like territorial sovereignty, boundaries, maps, and routes are woven together with the very idea of the nation. The people, residing in a particular nation gradually develop a sense of affection or patriotic feeling to that land which ultimately bind them under specific identity. *The Shadow Line* (1988) by Amitav Ghosh throws light on such concepts where Ila's grandmother suggests that Ila has no right to live in England. Her remarks show that war has constructed the nation or the nation is the outcome of war: She doesn't belong there. It took those people a long time to build that country... years of war and bloodshed. Everyone who lives there has earned his right to be there with blood: with their brother's blood and their father's blood and their son's blood... War is their religion. That's what it takes to make a country.¹¹ The nation, in her opinion, demands sacrifice. It cannot be gained without pain and bloodshed. Such comment seems ironic where the nation is defined by the deaths of its own and lives in its many memorials to its dead youth, men and women. A nation is born through the process of its community, lives. Salman Rushdie considers the creation of the nation as a mythical note. He opines that the birth of the nation is 'an extra festival on the calendar, a new myth to celebrate... a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will except in a dream we all agreed to dream... India, the new myth – a collective fiction in which anything was possible, a fable rivaled only by the two other mighty fantasies – money and God'.¹² To Rushdie, the task of mere heeding and singing the glory of one's own boundaries or territories seems inexplicable. Instead, he suggests to a nation without frontiers, i.e. a writer should never confine his creativity within the

geographical border of his/her nation. In his “Notes on Writing and the Nation” Rushdie considers the concept of nationalism and xenophobic nationalism as: Nationalism corrupts writers too... In a time of ever more narrowly defined nationalisms, of walled-in tribalism, writers will be found uttering the war cries of their tribes... Is the nation a closed system? In this internationalized moment, can any system remain closed? ... Good writing assumes a frontier less nation. Writers who serve frontiers have become border guards.¹³ Rushdie’s philosophical argument ‘nationalism generates mere tensions’ seems to contradict the idea of indigenusness and the emerging politics of identity. Indigenous literature, culture and traditions have its own history either of magnificence past or history of oppression. The rejection of nationalism will gradually eradicate the indigenous or homegrown cultural heritage. Hence, treating nationalism mere hostile form doesn’t seem appropriate at all times. Native (national) identity cannot be compromised. In order to define the indigenous culture, the writers must begin with the frontiers because lack of frontiers will define only identity in general since literature and culture always mirrors the tribes or specific community. The roots or primitive identity located in indigenous texts, defines the ethnic status. Hence, geographical mapping needs to be introduced, say frontiers serve as supporting system of globalization. Even the term ‘universe’ is the manifestation of number of unified nations. Healthy nationalism in place of narrowly defined nationalism will certainly lead the nation towards the framing up of an honest internationalism. Gandhi favoured the wide-ranging frame of nationalism instead of its constricted nature. He emphasizes upon humanitarian approach of nationalism in his ‘defense of Nationalism’ in *India of My Dreams* as: It is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e. when people belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man. It is not nationalism that is evil; it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rises on the ruin of, the other. Indian nationalism has

struck a different path. It wants to organize itself or to find full self-expression for the benefit and service of humanity at large.¹⁴

Tagore had awakened the wave of nationalism at the beginning of the twentieth century by composing a national anthem: *Jan Gan Man...*, though he was accused of praising the British king in this song. He had returned the award of 'knighthood' which was offered to him by colonial power in protest of *Jaliyawalacarnage*. It has also been argued that Tagore's poetry acquired international fame only because of the positive European response. In fact, Tagore stood against the authoritarian form of nationalism, but his outlook was interpreted from a different point of view and was understood anti-national unfortunately. Tagore had clarified his concept of patriotism by viewing that 'my country is great not because I am the child of this land, but I love my country because I believe in geographical adoration and it has preserved the live utterances of the great Sages during the restlessness of centuries'. There should be 'classless and casteless nation' as per Tagore's views. In response to a Japanese poet who was justifying the act of war as a spiritual factor to improve others, Tagore very aptly pointed out that the patriotism that has the right to sacrifice the happiness and human rights, would certainly invite the disasters instead of making sound base of great civilization. Tagore had deep faith in universal humanity and he wished to have freedom of heart, not as nationalist, but as an internationalist.¹⁵

Benedict Anderson argues that nations are an act of imagination, i.e. we can connect to people in other parts of the territory only in terms of imagining them through technology such as the novel and other forms of print.¹⁶

The logical argument over the concept of the nativity as a product of mere colonialist cannot be fully agreed upon. For instance, even prior, to be a part of British Empire Indians themselves began to think of the nation, which can be understood by various evidences accessible in history. Native consciousness remains an effective force to construct nation. The indigenous habitants do not prefer the hegemonic power structure obviously. They have their own historic past

woven together with cultural heritage. Only imperialists have the capacity to improvise the status of conquered land seems an established motto to carry the dominance of colonialism on forever. The rise of a nation can also be considered a natural process which grows and flourishes on the native land instead of alien's one. The nation is constructed socially and the allegory of nationhood is designed by certain ideologies to establish the national convention. Briefly speaking, the term 'nation' covers the total personality of the land, region or particular boundaries, cultural values and ethos and, in the present time, environmental and religious concerns, too. The factors like liberation from oppression, individual and general consciousness of the subjects to resist the others strengthen the idea of nation. The issue of native language too plays a significant role in shaping the national identity. Cultural association or exchange with 'others' inspires one to define self-image. Custom, tradition, culture and civilization, physical appearance, language, religious practices, community, geographical restrictions, etc. judge the status and concept of nation. Unification of all such features forms the image of a native nation.

John Strachey, writing in *India: Its Administration and Progress* in 1888, said "This is the first and most essential thing to remember about India – is that there not and never was an India, possessing... any sort of unity, physical, political, social or religious; no Indian nation".¹⁷ Strachey's objection would have been in accordance with the classification of nation wherein commonality in culture, religion and language are the projected norms to define a nation. India has remained multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-regional and multi-lingual land since centuries. The most appealing thing about India is its unity in diversity. To judge the status as a nation of any country according to the fixed parameter seems fairly unreasonable in this context. In spite of its multi-faceted image, India's unity and integrity have confirmed its worth as one nation. The manifold diversity of languages, cultures, tribes, communities, and religions has neither split up, nor ruined its status as a nation for many centuries. If the issues like common language or religion are merely considered to qualify a nation, then a nation like Switzerland

has three languages, two religions and three or four races seems to contradict the framed concept of nation. Switzerland is considered a nation in spite having a plurality in its set up, then why not India? Only Britain gave India its identity as a nation and transformed it into a political state seems illogical. Looking at the historical set up, Strachey's argument cannot be agreed upon in case of country like India. To justify this contention, a variety of authentic evidences located in Indian texts covering the entire impression of this land have been added hereafter. It is necessary to clarify here that Indian culture doesn't mean the only Hindu culture. In the Constitution of India, the word "Hindu" has been used to denote persons professing any religion originated in India, i.e. Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism or Sikhism. Indian civilization is distinguished from other civilizations of the world in respect of its continuity and heterogeneity, its accommodating ethos and its composite character. In fact, the term 'Hindu' is considered a geographical term and does not refer to a religious. Islam too, confirms its influence on Indian civilization in various fields, e.g. architecture, paintings, pottery, ceramic, Unani medicine, clothing, translation of Hindu texts in Urdu, religious preaching on the unity of God and equality of all human beings.

M. K. Gandhi in *Indian Home Rule* firmly asserts India as one nation by viewing that the farseeing ancestors of India could see India as an undivided land made by nature. Hence, they argued that it must be one nation. Gandhiji is of the view that only those who consider themselves civilized and superior persons can imagine that we are many nations: The English have taught us that we were not one nation before and that it will require centuries before we become one nation. This is without foundation. We were one nation before they came to India. One thought inspired us. Our mode of life was the same. It was because we were one nation that they were able to establish one kingdom subsequently, they divided us.

The British period in Indian history is observed for about 300 years (1610-1947) while the concept of formation of India had its roots located in the past. The true image of spiritual India can be summed up in the words of Vivekananda, the great Indian philosopher as: The Indian nation cannot be killed. Deathless, it

stands, and it will stand so long as that spirit shall remain as the background, so long as her people do not give up their spirituality. Our sacred motherland is a land of religion and philosophy... where and where alone, from the most ancient to the most modern times, there has been the highest ideal of life open to man. ¹⁸

It has been argued that only through westerns' contact and English education India received its present status as a modern nation, i.e. modern nation is a colonial concept. Such arguments remain groundless because of the availability of evidences in scientific, technological and educational development for centuries in India. There seems some danger in a state of modernity, where the possibility of establishing universal man having a single identity stands in contrast to destroy or emptying the self. The factors like the existence of self and destruction of possession have become challenging. The colonial didn't frame everything what is interpreted under the title 'modernity'. The existing democratic government in India is considered guided only by colonial masters has also its manifestation in an ancient Indian literature which preaches the ideals of humanity in its concrete forms. Will Durant, American historian considers: "India was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit the mother of Europe's languages: she was the mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; mother, through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all". ¹⁹

It has been often argued that India as a constitutionally united nation is the colonial construct. Such logic has a diversity of interpretations. The task of re-creating the nation and re-writing of history took place in almost all the colonized nations, the tools and the methodology continued to change along with the rhetoric of discourse. While in some case the re-establishing of the nation started along with the process of colonization, some countries like South Africa (Andre Brink), Jamaica (Jamaica Kincaid) and India (V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, M. G. Vassangi and others) are still involved in the process of re-inventing the nation/region. The most widely used tool in this direction was protest literatures.

However, major writers, political activists and freedom fighters in India also adopted the process of assimilation in their task of rebuilding the nation. Buddhadeb Guha's novel *The Bounty of the Goddess* presents an essentialist view of India as a nation. People, who are awake and awaken others, can save the Indian culture from the clutches of Westernization and globalization and preserve the essential Indianness of its culture.

To the westerners, the concept of nation is homogeneous where one can observe the 'one nation one language' system. For instance, only the English language is prevalent in England, or French in France are spoken, understood and read by its indigenous inhabitants, whereas, such an application of this theory seems impossible in an Indian context where language-wise regions are constructed. Here, no single language, but a group of States constructed through various languages which has resulted into a concept of modern nation. Hence, the specified concept of a nation can be viewed in Indian context as having a heterogeneous form. It was Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian constitution, who favoured and supported the idea of linguistic states to the nation like India wherein the issues like national and state language, religion, caste and class were pre-centered. Asha Sarangi in an article on "Ambedkar and the Linguistic States A Case for Maharashtra" views that the idea of one state, one language that Ambedkar defended over one language, one state was predominantly guided by his quest for development, justice, equality and freedom for the untouchables and Dalits who could perhaps learn the language of the new state and participate in its political and administrative affairs. Ambedkar consistently argued that the proposed linguistic states would become socially more homogeneous and politically democratic in due course of time.²⁰

As far as the status of nation in the present era is concerned, India seems to some extent different from the ancient one in its governmental system. The modern status of India is a democratic governance while in ancient time there was either kingship or autocratic governance, although the concepts of public welfare and certain democratic values were observed in the past, but not in its accurate

form what we call a form of democracy in the present expression. Generally, the king was elected according to the ancestral norms and natural rights. Ancient history of India mentions the heroic tales depicting the victorious autocrats and kings who were always found seizing the thrones of weaker and expanding the borders of their territories or regions. Such was the common practice.

The term 'region' has a multiplicity of meaning. Some critics classify it essentially as a geographical category. When it is measured in relation to physical features like geography, topography, climate, etc., it elucidates social phenomenon.

The anthropological and environmental approaches study the interrelation between the unusual traits of people and the geographical area and the relation between environment and people. Actually the notion of region and regional history were already existed prior to the arrival of colonialism. It is an entity existed. The emergence of nation re-signified the consciousness of regionalism. For example, in Indian context, it can be observed in the form of government funded agencies for the tribal people, preservation of indigenous trade, customs and traditions, advocacy of Swadeshi products, etc. S. Misra and T. Niranjana in an article on "*Thinking through Region*" observe that the concept of "region" in ways, explicit and implicit, has framed academic practices in the social sciences. The region emerges as an anachronistic site where the bygone feudal era continues to exist in its entire obscene splendor, a place where the past lives in the present.²¹

The idea of nationalism in India was one of the aspects of political modernity during pre-colonial phase. R.K.Narayan could generate the consciousness of nationalism at this stage. Hence, his outlook can also be considered modern in this context in place of mere traditional one. The region portrayed by him offers a slightly mixed impression of traditional and modern India. Narayan portray the region mirroring the initial phase of 20th century India incorporating the traditional impression of the region and this traditional form has been shown in perpetual clash with modernity. The pre-modern or traditional setup

of the region seems in transitional phase either resisting or striving towards modernity without sidestepping indigenous ethnicity utterly. His portrayal of region signifies the independence phase of the nation, during which new values emerged and more emphasis was given to Gandhian bearings, Indianization and simplification. The region manifested by Narayan characterized by humanism, social consciousness and perseverance of national spirit. The fictitious native land Malgudi by Narayan remains a symbolic representation of Southern part's image incorporating the indigenous culture of urban and rural India. To add this, the geographical and political boundaries of India vary in the course of time. Time being changes take place in its traditional set up undoubtedly. Narayan was the products 20th century India and India of Ashoka or prehistoric time doesn't retain its parallel formation till 20th century. The consciousness towards the removal of certain rigid socio-cultural traditions, values of democratic frame, spirit of nationhood, etc. of new era is apparently visible in his creativity. The mere absence of political and geographical fixity doesn't confirm the very idea of India as Nation having exclusively changed scenario than the past. One should agree here with what Renan defines nation a soul or spiritual principle. The prosperous heritage of memories and the will to persist the value are accumulated in it. The innate attachment to the native land doesn't wipe out altogether in the course of time. Hence, the nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past. In this sense, India of past and present time doesn't show its entirely changed frame. The civilization, tradition, or nature of this land more or less confirms its indigenous representation even in the current era. The writers do not ignore past completely, rather they synthesize past with present. Narayan pursue more or less the same outlook in his creation. The regional differences are observed in various sub-regions, the specialties of divisions and folk-life in a single language region. As a result of it each region receives its distinct personality. The region has its 'distinctive personality' through particular regional specialties. The sources of this personality are: the ecology and the nature of the earth, the folk life flourished through its natural factors and the history and its traditions. What is stated as ecological reference comprises geography, environment, customs and traditions,

professions, fairs and festivals and folk-dialect. In a way, the region plays a crucial role in shaping the destiny of the indigenous inhabitants. The folk-life of the region flourishes under its distinct nature. Such a region receives the nourishment through the specialties of its earth and local professions formed in association with it persistently. The people generally follow the customary manners. Such folk life can be called regional life and the shaping of life accordingly is considered the poignant element of regionality. In another way, the forms of nature serve as the vital base of each region's distinct feature. The form of nature, in association with its different seasons manifests the new radiance and among all the land bears a variety of shapes. The entire folk-life in connection to its moving wheels walks on the path of it in harmony. Consequently, the form of culture constructed through the practical approaches, festivals, customs and traditions of folk-life also strides in its synchronization. The representation of the nativity and its nature is obviously mirrored in people's food, costume, residence and even in shaping of the human nature. The basic sources of nativity are region and place. The distinction is found in the geographical situation and the kind of earth of each region. The mountains, the rivers, the oceans, the deserts, the esplanade, the minerals, the vegetations, etc. bestow the specialties of each region and its folk-life. In constructing the human form the colours, the body-figure, the food, the clothing, the dwelling, the customs, the character, the art, the religious thinking and the philosophy of human being play an indispensable part. The influence of nativity as well as geographical nature is obviously felt about man's food, e.g. the region where any edible available in huge quantity, already becomes the chief food of that locality. The variety of garb also seems in accordance to its geographical situation and environment. The seasonal variety also brings its influence in dress-wearing. The materials used to construct or decorate the residences or sculptures also mark its influence due to regional-geographical condition. Even the variety of building construction is also dependent upon the environment of its land. The folk-literature is an invaluable heritage of each region and its inhabitants. The true identity of people's personality and life-values of any region lies in its wonderful folk-songs, folk-tales, couplets, hymns and folk-proverbs out of which the regional

specialties are already carried to the height. Hence, nativity becomes a perception of literature. Though, literary artist while narrating any event depicts the place and time of a particular event naturally. Accordingly, in the backdrop of literary work, the portrayal of place and time would be natural to that extent. Though, the region has a variety of meanings. It can either be in the form of a small village or a town. The appropriateness of each province can be justified in such regional life. The people reside in particular region do not have the sufficient scope to migrate from their native land. Mostly they remain detached from the influence of modernized urban culture. In addition to this, being devoted to its earth they spend life by involving themselves into honest professions like agriculture and labor. Theirs is the blood relation to that land. Walking on the uncommon trail, they enjoy the pains and suffering in life, even, prefer to sacrifice themselves for the sake of orthodox traditions, life-values, and promises. They do not leave their ancient traditions and maintain indigenous cultural values, and do not bother about their erosion. Speedy change doesn't suit them. As a result, they retain their originality and existence as a geographical-natural unit. Though, the industry-centered urban culture brings them into contact with a number of other cultures. As a result, the change in traditions, values and courtesy takes place and they lose the homegrown identity at a snail's pace. The folk-literature aims at enhancing the space of reader's empathy, through which he could experience the pounding of regional culture. When the personality of the whole region is carved in the spirit of the literary artist, such region becomes his own temporarily.²²

Aijaz Ahmed *In Theory* employs the term "Indian Literature" into inverted commas to show its problematic identity. He denies the possibilities of positing it under a single category and arrives at the conclusion over its expansive image. He visualizes Indian literature either as the expression of an essential Indian culture or as the unity of discrete literary formations.²³ G. N. Devy in "Of Many Heroes': An Indian Essay in Literary Historiography" discovers that the Indian past is rich in diverse traditions of canons that can be classified into five basic categories as: Suta Literature, Mantra Literature, the Shastras Literature, Akshara Literature, and

Prakrit Literature. Devy shows that such literary heritage includes the forms and movements from the earliest oral to later traditions which analyze the vast corpus of literary production. While interpreting literary scholarship in “After Amnesia”, Devy focuses on contemporary erudition in Indian languages by viewing to what extent modern Indian Broadly speaking, Indian literature consist everything which can be defined under the term ‘literature’. It covers up religious and mundane, epic, lyric, dramatic and didactic prose as well as oral poetry and song. As Tilak languages ‘learnt to forget’ the literary criticism that had been rejected by them during post-Sanskrit medieval centuries. He observes that India had a large number of culturally rich languages, but the absence of literary criticism in the prevalent languages remained a major barrier. The cultural amnesia is the result of colonial hegemony which guided the native towards so-called new image and self-investigative insight. The cultural demoralization generated through colonialism made the native Indians inept to search their indigenous past tradition.²⁴ As Tilak translated the *Bhagavad-Gita* and favoured the Ganpati festival to generate religious identity while Aurobindo sang the philosophy located in the Vedic culture to strengthen the magnificence of Indian civilization. Indian Literature is the mirror of Indian culture and its rich ancient tradition. India has a woven tradition of storytelling. Naik in *A History of Indian English Literature* observes that Indian English Literature defined is not part of English Literature ... It is legitimately a part of Indian literature since its difference is the expression in it of an Indian ethos.²⁵

Indian literature remains an expression of Indian ethos as a synthesis rather than exclusiveness. It shows a collective representation of Indian culture, tradition and history. The present thesis engages this position because Narayan expression confirms representation of Indian ethos while manifesting urban or rural India. Their thematic treatment truly mirrors the indigenous Indian culture (traditional and contemporary) and addresses socio-cultural and political scenario of nation incorporating mythological reference, religious and ethical background, class and caste status, reverence for values and Gandhian bearings, resistance to power,

desire to be free from colonial subjugation, etc. He demonstrates an inherent nature visualizing the true aspects of Indianness.

The major focus in the present thesis is on Regional novels, which has been considered one of the types of novel as a form of literature. Regional novel writing in India, there doesn't seem any integrated movement. The factor like linguistic modification of states after independence, i.e. the year 1956 is considered to be responsible in fostering the consciousness of nativity. The linguistic reorganization is thought to have offered the space and liberty to literary artists to represent the oppressed and marginalized in literature. Hence, regional novels acquired its worth in the light of the political movements fought for conferring the equal human rights to subjugated classes. Postcolonial literature critically addresses certain issues related to a history of oppression, and colonialism viewing both forms, internal, and external, and racial discrimination. From the critics' points of view, the features like social and cultural change or erosion, treatment of power and exploitation, colonial abandonment and alienation, and the use of English language characterize the postcolonial literature. In a literal sense, 'post-colonial' is that which has been followed by colonization. Broadly speaking, it engages with both colonial as well as the time after colonialism into consideration. Hence, the perception of 'post' in hyphenated 'post-colonialism' or unhyphenated 'post colonialism' advocates not mere 'subsequent to', but also refers a look back in time. Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins in *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics* very aptly simplifies the nuance of post-colonialism as: The term post-colonialism—according to a too-rigid etymology—is frequently misunderstood as a temporal concept, meaning the time after colonialism has ceased, or the time following the politically determined Independence Day on which a country breaks away from its governance by another state. Not a naïve teleological sequence, which supersedes colonialism, post-colonialism is, rather, an engagement with, and contestation of, colonialism's discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies. . . . A theory of post-colonialism must, then, respond to more than the merely chronological construction of post-independence,

and to more than just the discursive experience of imperialism.²⁶ The majority of postcolonial perspectives judged by critics are apparently evident in the fictional universe of R. K. Narayan.

The detailed analysis of this topic has been included in the following chapter. The present thesis covers the representation of nativity as portrayed by celebrated Indian Writer R. K. Narayan. Hence, before interpreting the regional spirit manifested in the novel this novelist, it would be useful here to depict the gradual development of the novel as a form in Indian literature to comprehend the topic more systematically.

The novel came into existence in India in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was practically non-existent in the Indian languages before the nineteenth century. With the introduction of English in India, there was a spurt of translation and numbers of English classics were soon translated into the various Indian languages. The models for Indian writing in English were the English classics. The novel is considered purely a legacy of British rule arose from political and social situations. It is often argued that the Indian English novel is an example of literary hybridization of Indian content and western form. Meenakshi Mukherjee surveys in *Realism and Reality*: “In spite of the various limitations and incompatibilities, the novel in India which began under the British tutelage soon acquired its own distinctive character”.²⁷ According to the survey the entire framework of Indian fiction in English falls into three divisions: the traditional novel of social realism before independence, the modern novel of experimentation after independence and the new contemporary novel since 1981. The phase wise expression of this form is also considered: the first phase is “Nativity” from 1864 to 1930; the second phase is on “confluxion” from 1930 to 1980 while the third one is of “culmination” since 1981. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was the first Indian writer of a novel in English. He made his mark with *Rajmohan's Wife* which was serialized in the Calcutta Weekly, *The Indian Field* in 1864, though this novel published in books form only in 1935. This novel is a melodramatic tale of a typical, long suffering Hindu wife, Matangini, at the hands of her oppressive

husband, Rajmohan. The novel points out the degradation of moral and social values. The three women novelists appeared before the turn of the century: Toru Dutt's *Bianca* or *The Young Spanish Maiden*, is a romantic love story set in England (1878).

The Indian English novel came into its own with the Gandhian Struggle for freedom. The majority of the novelists during this period (1920-1947: The Gandhian Whirlwind) registered their voice against political, social and ideological discrepancy spread among the Indians. The appearance of foremost trio- Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao- on literary scene is considered to be the most significant event in the history of Indian English literature during 1930s. With the publication of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936) and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) the novel in English may be said to have come of age. Thereafter, a number of novelists offered their best to enrich this form of literature. Besides, Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan, the novelists like Bhamini Bhattacharya (*Shadow from Ladakh*: 1966), Manohar Malgonkar (*The Princes*:1963), Khushvantsinh (*Train to Pakistan*:1956), Balachandra Rajan (*The Dark Dancer*:1959), Kamala Markandaya (*Nectar in a Sieve*:1954) and Anita Desai (*Bye-bye Blackbird*:1971) have considerably enriched the Indian English novel.

In the recent years, Indian fiction writers have received worldwide readership. The Indian Diaspora has attempted to bring astonishing realities located in the Indian rural culture. The eminent personalities in this field are: Vikram Seth (*The Golden Gate* 1986, *A Suitable Boy* 1993), Shashi Tharoor (*The Great Indian Novel* 1989), Amitav Ghosh (*The Shadow Lines* 1988) and Rohinton Mistry (*Such a Long Journey* 1991). Some of them have been honored prestigious literary status or nominated for such honour. Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) brought unpredicted changes. The prejudiced Western attitude towards Indian literary talent started changing when Rushdie ushered in a new writing trend by using hybrid language. Women writers like Kamala Das, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy and Jhumpa Lahiri have focused on women's

predicament and condemned the female exploitation in their novels. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) received ample critical attention and honoured with Booker Prize. Likewise, Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) obtained Booker prize. Chetan Bhagat, known as the icon of youth, is the most recent energetic writer whose creativity has offered a new image to Indian English Fiction.

Looking to the regional appeal in the Indian English novel, the novelists like Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan and Arundhati Roy introduced the picture of the region, either imaginative or real, in their novels to define India as a nation with its indigenous culture and civilization. *Kanthapura* by Raja Rao (1938), a novel representing the impact of the Gandhian movement on the Indian people, is set at Kanthapura. It is a south Indian village near Hassan where Gandhiji's civil disobedience movement takes place. Similarly, Arundhati Roy has set her debut novel *The God of Small Things* in Ayemenem in the central Kerala District of Kottayam. The writer has ushered India into the modernity of advanced civilization in this novel. The story focuses on Indian Village depicting the genuine image of India, but its appeal is modern as well as westernized. R.K. Narayan has imagined Malgudi in the majority of his novels. The fictitious region Malgudi truly mirrors the versatile form of the nation. It has been interpreted as a vision, a waking dream and Indian reality. Some critics find similarity between Narayan's Malgudi and K. Natarajan's Kedaram which remains the locale of Natarajan's *Chronicles of Kedaram*, *Athawar House* and some other stories, but according to Natarajan 'Kedaram is a composite creation made up of bits of Pudukottal'.²⁸ Hence, in spite of its late beginning, novel in Indian Writing in English has proved its worth. Looking to its entire frame, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and MulkRaj Anand are considered its founding figures and the novelists like Malgonkar, Bhamini Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande stood as its designers while V. S. Naipaul, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, etc. have authenticated to be the consolidators of this literary

form. While appreciating its stature, Rushdie very aptly remarks that the novelists “are in a position to conquer English Literature”.²⁹

Substantial research work has been conducted on the genre of the novel and its various aspects in English, but the study focusing on the theme of the region and nativity in Indian writing in English novel. This dissertation is aimed at studying the representation of the nativity in the novels of R. K. Narayan from the point of view of postcolonial studies by highlighting the socio-cultural, political and religious dimensions in his works. It is possible to locate the postcolonial discourse of creating an image of indigenous culture through the means of representing rural locale, language and customs in the works of R. K. Narayan. The creative period of Narayan extends from the pre-independence to the post-independence phase of the twentieth century India. His works cover majority of features representing the postcolonial dimension of literature, which has been examined in the following chapters. Narayan is regarded as the father-figure in postcolonial Indian English fiction. He represents the notion of Native land and nation which has become now-a-days vigorous debate in postcolonial studies. The thesis explores how the literary discourse of his novels participates in constructing ‘nation’ in a postcolonial context by representing ‘Native’. Instead of seeing the categories of ‘nation’ and ‘Native’ as simple opposites, the thesis examines the problematic ways in which these notions are represented.

Before going into the detailed analysis, it would be useful to lay out briefly the frame of post colonialism, using which the texts of Narayan have been studied. Looking at its framework in the context of contemporary critical discourse, term ‘postcolonial’ is often applied to mean the countries from ‘former European empires’. Nevertheless, postcolonial approaches materialize even ‘prior to political freedom’, and hence, ‘anti-colonial writings conducted during the colonized phase of a nation’ also represent the ‘postcolonial’. In place of its time being frame, the term ‘postcolonial’ adds more to a ‘methodology and approach’.³⁰

The concept of nativity and nation has realistically been depicted by the regional novelist in all the novels discussed above. The novelist has attempted to confirm either traditional or transitional phase of regional life wherein one can observe its two-folded form, say excellent as well as poor. Through locating certain weakness in cultural, political and religious set up, their critical concern offers the impression of generating a fair and balanced societal frame. The chief endeavor of the novelists seems to characterize a particular native land and its socio-cultural dimensions through which the quest of national identity has been carried out fruitfully. He has visualized the ideal portrait of cultural identity, self-image and overall personality of a particular locality by focusing on native specialties. These native land, whether one looks at Tamilnadu, English or American regional novels, are a microcosm of a larger nationality; albeit quite an important one. If they do not seem comforting to the popular notion, which hardly happens, he at least defines the mainstream view of the nation and offer it a distinct culture and interpretations.

1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The concept of the nation as a product of mere colonialist cannot be fully agreed upon. For instance, even prior, to be a part of British Empire Indians themselves began to think of the nation, which can be understood by various evidences accessible in history. Native consciousness remains an effective force to construct nation. The indigenous habitants do not prefer the hegemonic power structure obviously. They have their own historic past woven together with cultural heritage. Only imperialists have the capacity to improvise the status of conquered land seems an established motto to carry the dominance of colonialism on forever. The rise of a nation can also be considered a natural process which grows and flourishes on the native land instead of alien's one. The nation is constructed socially and the allegory of nationhood is designed by certain ideologies to establish the national convention. Briefly speaking, the term 'nation' covers the total personality of the land, region or particular boundaries, cultural values and ethos and, in the present time, environmental and religious concerns.

too. The factors like liberation from oppression, individual and general consciousness of the subjects to resist the others strengthen the idea of nation. The issue of native language too plays a significant role in shaping the national identity. Cultural association or exchange with 'others' inspires one to define self-image. Custom, tradition, culture and civilization, physical appearance, language, religious practices, community, geographical restrictions, etc. judge the status and concept of nation. Unification of all such features forms the image of a nation.

The task of re-creating the nation and re-writing of history took place in almost all the colonized nations, the tools and the methodology continued to change along with the rhetoric of discourse. While in some case the re-establishing of the nation started along with the process of colonization, some countries like South Africa (Andre Brink), Jamaica (Jamaica Kincaid) and India (V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, M. G. Vassangi and others) are still involved in the process of re-inventing the nation/region. The most widely used tool in this direction was protest literatures. However, major writers, political activists and freedom fighters in India also adopted the process of assimilation in their task of rebuilding the nation. Buddhadeb Guha's novel *The Bounty of the Goddess* presents an essentialist view of India as a nation. People, who are awake and awaken others, can save the Indian culture from the clutches of Westernization and globalization and preserve the essential Indianness of its culture. Nankua, the young Leftist idealist defines a nation as his God: "My God is my country. The God I care for all the time will surely care for me".

The regional differences are observed in various sub-regions, the specialties of divisions and folk-life in a single language region. As a result of it each region receives its distinct personality. In a way, the region plays a crucial role in shaping the destiny of the indigenous inhabitants. The folk-life of the region flourishes under its distinct nature. Such a region receives the nourishment through the specialties of its earth and local professions formed in association with it persistently. The people generally follow the customary manners. Such folk life

can be called regional life and the shaping of life accordingly is considered the poignant element of regionality.

Generally, being native means being attached to a particular place. In fact, if everything is already native, then what is the need to discuss nativism? But when non- native, alien, imported values, language, and cultures coming from outside threaten native values, languages and cultures, communities have to become nativistic in order to survive. Basically, nativism is entirely self- manifest as in the plants and trees that patiently grow and live in their own soil. But there are critical moments when cultures which are challenged must become aggressive.

In this background I would like to say that Narayan and other Indian English writers' focuses on representation of Indian ethos while manifesting urban or rural India. Their thematic treatment truly mirrors the indigenous Indian culture and addresses socio- cultural and political scenario of nation incorporating mythological reference, religious and ethical background, class and caste status reverence for values and Gandhian bearings, resistance to power, desired to be free from colonial subjugation etc. they demonstrate an inherent nature visualizing the true aspects of nativity.

In this background I have identified following objectives.

- To explore the nativity in Themes.
- To explore the nativity in Characters.
- To find out nativity in Language.
- To explore the nativity in his Narrative Techniques.

As we know, he is a most artistic of Indian writers in English and presents people as they are without any personal bias, and from the objective heights of a luminous temperament. In fact, among modern novelist he as few equals. His novels are free from propaganda, philosophy or didacticism. Indeed, he is a writer, pure and simple having no pretensions or ambitions to be recognized as a scholar or idealist. There is no doubt he has taken care to write of things which are more

universal in nature. Plots and themes in his novels revolve round human joys and sorrows, romance and frustrations of the people of the native region. In this view I have perused all novels of R.K. Narayan in detail and put effort to identify the things which are comes under nativism.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Narayan's contribution claims serious attention which it has not so far received in the measure it deserves. Narayan's individuals moving under the prevailing social customs and traditions revolting and accepting defeat in the end with sense of resignation. We can find out nativity in each and every aspect of his works.

Apart from the appreciation from the critics Annaiah Gowda has expressed a few decedent voice about his language, he makes this comment on dialog in the indian novel in English in general.

"One of the charges made against the Indian novelist in English is that he is bookish and he doesn't use colloquialism in abundance and his characters do not speak". (The Literary of Half Yearly, Jan 197, p. 34.)

P.S. Sundaram too remarked that in Narayan's novels the same neutral style was used whoever is the speaker. (R.K. Narayan by Sundaram, p. 136.)

Such remarks all for an examination of novels of R.K. Narayan, It is a fact that deserves to be repeated at retained in the mind that dialog in the India novels in English can't attempt to reflect real speech, because real speech doesn't exists. Most of the characters in R.K.N novels speak Tamil. Yet the dialog should not appear to have been translated from a Tamil original. Narayan must have realised the absurdity of trying to make characters like to speak in the latest British or American slang, or in a hypothetical Indian English dialect so he makes his characters speak in a simple straight forward natural style. In order to address such issues and identify nativity in themes, characters, language and narrative techniques. I have selected following novels for detailed study.

1. *Swami and Friends* (1935)
2. *The Bachelor of Arts* (1939)
3. *The Dark Room* (1938)
4. *The English Teacher* (1945)
5. *Mr. Sampath* (1949)
6. *The Financial Expert* (1952)
7. *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955)
8. *The Guide* (1958)
9. *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1961)
10. *The Vendor of Sweet* (1967)

1.3 METHODOLOGY

Any research indeed requires scientific, systematic method otherwise it is difficult to reach goal. As any research in the field of literature is deserved following stages.

- **Identification of problem**

A good statement of the problem is based on some assumption. A assumption is the supposition that it is taken for granted to better to establish the scope, frame of reference and conditions under which the study will conducted. Many Indian English writers put an effort to restore our tradition, culture and many more native aspects. Under the impact colonialism these are the results of self-conscious to retain our identity. Narayan also contributed lot by his creative literature. Now I assumed the problem that how Narayan successfully contributed build a concept of

nation using native aspects in language, character, theme and narrative techniques in his novels.

- **Review of literature**

One of the early steps in planning a research work is to review research done previously in the particular area of interest and relevant area. Qualitative analysis of this earlier research gives an indication for further study. As per my knowledge, not less than 125 research works have been undertaken by many individuals and various educational institutions on topics like comparative study with many regional writers, idiomatic usage, women characters, imaginary town, mythology, nature, child psychology, orthodox behavior, Gandhian philosophy, sainthood, culture, tradition, language etc. As a result of this review of literature, I came to the conclusion that no specific study on Nativism is concerned is not at all undertaken.

- **Study of R.K. Narayan novels**

To identify the native aspects in his themes, characters, language and narrative techniques, I have referred primary and secondary sources for his novels and critical analysis on Narayan's works are also examined for the purpose. Apart from this, I have gone through with some research works, articles, periodicals, dissertations, news papers on R.K. Narayan literature.

- **Analysis of R.K. Narayan novels**

I have made critical examination of his novels and related studies.

- **Conclusion**

I conclude that the Native region represented by him offers the portrayal of social, religious, political scenario of the contemporary nation. His representations of native region indicate that they are more literary and cultural ones than merely geographical areas. To uphold indigenous cultural identity, the betterment of societal, political and religious frame, the removal of inequality, evil conventions and superstitions, etc. seems his chief concern. Of course, only literary representations of Narayan do not

capture the wide range of complexities and dimensions of native region and nation, but offer a useful way of engaging with these multifaceted issues.

- **Bibliography**

The last part of my research work, like other research studies, is to provide list of books of research, encyclopedias, dictionary, journals, published and unpublished theses which is related to R.K. Narayan works in scientific manner called Bibliography.

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CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“The literature in any field forms the foundation upon which all future work will be built. If we fail to build the foundation of knowledge provided by the review of literature our work is likely to be shallow and naïve and will often duplicate work that has already been done better by some one else.”¹

-W.R. Borg

“The Keys to the vast storehouse of published literature may open doors to sources of significant problems and explanatory hypotheses and provide helpful orientation for definition of the problem, background for selection of procedure and comparative data for interpretation of results. In order to be creative and original, one must read extensively and critically as astimulusto thinking.”²

– Charter V. Good

“Practically all human knowledge can be found in books and libraries. Unlike other animals that must start a new with each generation, man builds upon the accumulated and recorded knowledge of the past. His constant adding to the vast store of knowledge makes possible progress in all areas of human endeavor.”³

-John W. Best

The above definitions will depict the necessity of review of literature. Review of literature in any field forms the foundation upon which all future research work will be done. If we fail to identify the work done so far then our research work is likely to be shallow and naïve and will often duplicate work that has already studied even better by others.

The phrase ‘review of literature’ consists of two words: Review and Literature. The word ‘literature’ has conveyed different meaning from the traditional meaning. It is used with reference to the language e.g. English literature, Hindi literature, and Sanskrit literature. It includes subject content: prose, poetry, drams, novels, stories etc. Here in research methodology the term

literature refers to the knowledge of a particular area of investigation of any discipline.

The term 'review' means to organize the knowledge of the specific area of research to evolve a temple of knowledge to show that the study would be an addition to that particular field. The task of review of literature is highly creative and tedious because researcher has to synthesis the available knowledge of the field in a unique way to provide the rationale for study.

As I said earlier the review of literature is essential. Some of the reasons are identified as bellow:

- One of the early necessary steps in planning a research work is to review research, which is nothing but research work done previously in the particular subject, also quantitative and qualitative analysis of this research normally gives the researcher an indication for future studies.
- It is very essential for every researcher to be up-to-date about information related to research problem already done by others. It is considered to be most important pre-requisite to actual planning and conducting the research.
- It avoids the duplication of the study of findings to take an advantage from similar or related field as regards, to methodology, techniques of data collection, procedure adopted and conclusions drawn. One can justify his/her own endeavor in the subject.
- Review provides as source of problem of study, an analogy may be drawn for identifying and selecting his/her own problem of research. The researcher formulates his/her hypotheses on the basis of review of literature. It also provides the rationale for the research. The results and findings of the research can be discussed in the proposed study.
- The review of literature indicates the clear picture of the problem to be solved. The scholarship in the field can be developed by reviewing the literature of the field.

Sources of review of literature

Various sources of R.K. Narayan works have been used for this purpose. Available sources have been broadly classified into following heads.

- **Books and Text books Material:** The most useful list of books published in the English language on R.K.Narayan is the Cumulative Book Index and Book Review Index, Books Review Digest, Subject Guide to Books indicates that books are in print or press or forthcoming books.
- **Periodicals:** A periodical as a publication issued in successive parts, usually at regular intervals and as a rule, intended to be continued indefinitely. These include Yearbook, Documents, Almanacs on R.K.Narayan, The Cumulative Book Index, International Abstracts, Journals, Newspapers, Magazines, International Index to Periodicals on R.K.Narayan works.
- **Abstracts:** The abstract, review or digests on novels of R.K.Narayan. In addition to provide a systematized list of reference sources, it includes a summary of the contents. Usually the brief summaries of research studies are given in the form of abstracts.
- **Encyclopedias:** Encyclopedias provide concise information on topics written by R.K.Narayan. They provide a convenient source of information and often include illustrations and bibliographies. Only specialized encyclopedias deal with restricted areas of knowledge on works of R.K.Narayan.
- **Specialized Dictionaries:** There are specialized dictionaries of English literature which includes terms, words and their meanings on figurative language used by R.K.Narayan.
- **Dissertations and Theses:** The Theses and dissertations which embody the bulk of presenting research on R.K.Narayan, which are usually housed by the institutions and universities that award the authors their advanced degrees. Sometimes these studies are published in whole or in

the form of book or in research journals. The related dissertations and theses are the main sources of review of literature.

- **Newspaper:** The newspapers of that particular period provide up-to-date information and speeches, reports, conferences, new developments in field of research. It is also one of the important sources of review of literature for my study.

By exploring the literature moves in that particular field of knowledge where one can evaluate new findings in the respective field, gaps in knowledge contradictory findings and identifying needed research. It will be familiar with methods and bibliographies that may prove useful in my research investigation.

As per above mentioned mode of sources hereby I have identified and used for planning my future study on selected fictions of R.K.Narayan.

Following few works which are related to my study and an attempt has been made to give brief note on that.

*Use of myth in the novels of Raja Rao and R K Narayan:*⁴Rajesh Kumar's attempt to describe how the novelists use myth in their novels. And he also confined that the study of the novels of Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan, which appears that their treatment of mythical parallels lacks dexterity to make the subtle notions manageable. One can, therefore, get an insight into the aesthetic as well as ethical philosophy of Indian culture if one studies the myths and mythology of Indian culture. Use of myth in the novels of Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan, it become obvious that they are deeply rooted in their Indian culture and its ethos. Myth offer readymade patterns of traditional motif and symbols for communicating the conventional as well as new meaning. The Ramayana, The Mahabharata and The Puranas are the perennial sources from which our writers can fruitfully derive their thematic patterns in variegated ways to suit their purpose. This researcher observed in the foregoing discussion in his theses that there are mainly a couple of ways in which myths have been employed by these two novelists- as part of a digressional use and as structural parallels. Perhaps, the selectivity in utilizing the

myths, not for art's sake but for the sake of society, will go a long way in evolving a rational attitude towards myth.

*Yoknapatawpha and Malgudi A Study Of William Faulkner and R K Narayan:*⁵ Al-Gobaei Faiz Ahmed Saleh had been finely investigate how the fictional worlds of both the creative writers William Faulkner's "*Yoknapatawpha*" and R.K. Narayan's "*Malgudi*" are brought to the general or the universal level while translating the actual societal realities into fictional world. And he also put his views on the fictional world theory which tackles the fictional world of narrative fiction as an imaginary possible world unavailable in actual life. In his study, the ontology and the poetics of fictional world of a narrative fiction has been tackled with reference to the two authors creating their respective worlds of fantasy and reality. And he signifies that the way a fictional world is constructed and created is a useful mode of not only understanding and appreciating that text but also understanding the fictional world and the process of its creation. It helps readers, in general, and students, in particular, understand how the literary text works. The process of re-constructing the fictional world of a literary text requires the reader's participation. Through the process of reading, a reader is able to have an access to the story, creating its fictional world in his/her mind and imagination. William Faulker's *Yoknapatawpha* country and the R.K.Narayan's *Malgudi* town are among the most memorable imaginary places in the twentieth century narrative fiction. Observing these two fictional worlds provides a means to enter the fictive or imaginary landscapes not only of these individual novelists but of the literary world as a whole. He also suggests the readers that furthermore, studying two different fictional worlds helps not only to explore what distinguishes a fictive world of one writer from another, but also highlights the different ways and processes of creating the reader's own fictional world.

*Social consciousness in the novels of R K Narayan with special reference to the guide, Swami and friends, the Dark room and the Bachelor of Arts:*⁶ Anar singh portrays art in context of literature, which gives it sharpness, relevance, precision and significance. And he also reveals that social consciousness of the people at

large of common issues in R.K.Narayan's novels, and from one perspective Narayan seems but a passive chronicler of the common wisdom prevalent in society in general relating to the ordinary facets of life, Narayan seems to be injecting novelty in his work. He only brings to the surface what is so diffused that no one seems to see it, what is so common that no one seems to feel the need of talking about it. In his study he examined in detail the success attained by Narayan in reflecting social consciousness of the varied aspects of life in his novels. His projection of the sociological status of children, their role in the family, the special place of the male child, the interaction between the different generations in the family and other related aspects has been graphic as well as highly credible. He confines that more importantly, Narayan chronicles not merely social consciousness as it is but also its evolution and progress as it changes with the changing times and no one come across a more penetrating and artistic rendering of social consciousness in fiction.

Language and style in R K Narayan's fiction:⁷ Narayanaswami V.R. in his theses titled Language and style in R.K.Narayan's fiction discussed conveniently that Narayan's fiction often tend to convert into vaporous abstractions what Narayan has presented in such beautifully concrete terms and treating Narayan's writing as fit material for the stylistician's dissection table. But stylistic analysis, if done with due watchfulness, can surely add to his understanding of a work of art. The pattern in language that is revealed by a linguistic study corresponds to and illuminates the pattern in experience that is presented by the novelist. He tried to find out several features of Narayan's style, not noticed by critics so far, have been discussed, with examples from the novels and short stories. Though the methods of linguistic analysis have been applied, the aim has been to pass beyond the analysis to an understanding of the theses and attitudes reflected in Narayan's works. Form the point of view of language and style, Narayan's syntax, vocabulary, the sensory awareness, use of imaginary, irony studied through the observations. Such a study would make the reader more sensitive to the ironic overtones of Narayan's apparently neutral, straight-forward writing. So, he confined that his language is

admirably suited to admit the reader into an understanding of his sympathetic yet ironic, enthusiastic yet uncommitted, picture of life.

Human relationship in the novels of R K Narayan:⁸ Sanahanbi Chenglei Wairokpam explains Human relationship in the novels of R.K.Narayan, Narayan is a multi-dimensional novelist sparkling in humour through simple tales told in the fictional town of Malgudi. His plots are constructed with simple to complex human relationships among southern Indians but they have become universal because of his themes of universal significance. The background and experience it is natural that R.K.Narayan makes his novels interesting products of unique human relationship. He introduces the town of Malgudi through his young characters in the novel *Swami and Friends*. When compares his novels from early novels (pre-independence novels) to later novels (Post-independence novels) novel to novel his maturity and writing technique has been improved a lot in them. In the treatment of the theme and the development of the characters there is some apparent progress. So, he finally confines that through such novels R.K.Narayan has achieved many goals which a common novelist can never dream of. His novels have been responsible for introducing Indian landscape, Indian custom, Indian tradition and Indian characters to the readers all over the world. He has combined the traditional method of narrating a story with modern techniques. This synthesis of two techniques has given way for the modern Indian writers to write with more scope and a new dimension. He has also widened the horizon of the English vocabulary by introducing many new words based on Indian languages.

Women in R K Narayan's Novels:⁹ Sarita discussed in her thesis the different roles of women dealt with in his novels, Narayan shows how women play significant roles in the family as well as in the society. Narayan's female characters are replicas of common Indian women. These characters stand both for change and for resistance to change. The struggles made by family as well as by society to accept new modes of living are presented in all his novels through a series of counterpoints and contrasts between older and younger generations of women and among different classes of people. Basically, Narayan holds traditional views on

women. He projects women characters based on Indian myths, legends and epics. She observes that both the roles of women as traditional Indian women and modern seeker of emancipation are synthesized by Narayan just to bring harmony in the family as well as in the society. And his creations are artistic and mysterious. His heroes are unheroic and his heroines are replicas of common Indian women. The struggle for accepting new models of living by the society is presented very subtly and delicately in all his novels. His works, since they are free from every theory, appeal to the heart of various men and women. Through this Narayan clearly observes human characters psychologically and objectively and maintains his acute sense of Indianness in presenting themes, characters and dialogue.

The representation of region in the novels of r k narayan and pannalal patel a comparative study:¹⁰ Bhagvanbhai Chaudhari Looking at various representations of regionality observed in both the novelists: Narayan and Pannalal have similar spirit. Both have attempted to depict the indigenous nature of a nation and its cultural heritage. They have preferred to draw the selected regions which symbolize and define the nation in general. The majority of their novels can be read as postcolonial texts. Postcoloniality in the literature showed its live appeal to construct and modify the indigenous nature of a nation and its regions. These literary artists have tried to locate native culture through their fabricated mythical plots to fortify the idea of nation and nationalism. He has analyzed various literary texts by the authors in question along with critical discourses about them to elaborately discuss the concepts and ideas. The various concept and the issues of the nation and region and its textual representation as discussed by various theorists and thinkers, scrutinizes the postcolonial aspects and comparative study in the novels of Narayan and Pannalal. Finally concluded that region represented by both these novelists offers the portrayal of social, religious, political scenario of the contemporary nation. Of course only literary representations of both these novelists do not capture the wide range of complexities and dimensions of region and nation, but offer a useful way of engaging with these multifaceted issues.

*A study of the Vedic thoughts and use of language in the select novels of R K Narayan:*¹¹ Jayananda exposes Vedic thoughts and use of language in Narayan's novels and he says most of the Indians are exposed right from their infancy to the Vedic Thoughts irrespective of their religion, social status, economic conditions or Educational qualifications. So naturally some of the important aspects of the Vedic thoughts may creep into their mind even without their awareness. It is because of this, most Indians seriously think at least at times about life after death, *karma* and rebirth. They perform funeral rites and pray for the departed soul. But they may not have absolute faith in the transcendental aspects of the Vedic thoughts. Narayan has described vividly the transcendental experience of communicating with the spirit of his wife in *The English Teacher*. And this experience had a tremendous impact on his philosophy of life and it is revealed in his subsequent novels. It may be evident from the Post-Independence novels of Narayan that he has been enormously influenced by the Hindu Vedic thoughts. The fact that Narayan frequently refers to *The Bhagavad-Gita*, which is said to be the essence of all the Vedas, may substantiate it. Any writer who has got a very sound religious background and strong faith in the Vedic thoughts may naturally be tempted to impart them to the readers. *The Bhagavad-Gita* that only a self-realized person might be qualified to preach spirituality. Especially the novels under this study, that he makes a conscious endeavour to impart the transcendental wisdom imbibed from the Vedic scriptures, *The Bhagavad-Gita* in particular, to his readers. So, that finally Jayananda confines that the present study is an attempt to approach Narayan's work in a Vedic perspective. The Hindu Vedic scriptures are so vast and the Vedic wisdom is so deep that the novels of Narayan may unfold new regions of research work if one approaches them in a similar perspective.

*Idioms in R K Narayan's novels a linguistic analysis:*¹² Kavita in her analysis, she explains the R.K.Narayan's life, works, and idioms are an effort to set a background before entering the world of Narayan's idioms. Of course, Narayan avoided reading to avoid the influence. But he couldn't escape the influence of our mythology, culture and philosophy in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' and 'A Tiger

for Malgudi'. The idioms related to Indian eatables, festivals (eg- 'salting and pickling', 'fire eyed') are sure to add to the colours of India. Among the big trios R.K.Narayan's role in making English an "Indian" language is remarkable. While translating 'fool's paradise' into Kannada we can't literally translate as 'moorkhara swarga'.. because in native tongue the parallel idiom in use may be contextually 'Ram rajya', 'tirukana kanasu', 'hagaluganasu', or 'moorkhara sante'. In the same way 'going to the dogs'. Some idioms we can't translate but, a transcreation would be very convincing. Here nativity, traditions all count. Every idiom is nourished in its centuries old culture and traditions. This work is about the language used by Narayan in his novels. Finally, she hopes that her present work will definitely encourage and motivate the future researchers to take up similar topics for their research.

R K Narayan the socio economic background of his novels:¹³ Tapas projects Socio- Economic background in the novels of R.K.Narayan in which Narayan is a prolific writer whose forte is prose narrative in general and fiction and short stories in particular. In the preceding pages an attempt has been made to assess the special quality of Narayan's Indo-English fiction and also to examine how far his Malgudi represents changing India and the dynamic profile of Indian life. However, it needs to be clarified that the present study does not aim at either emphasizing or establishing a sociological or an economic theory about Narayan's Malgudi, that is impossible, for, Malgudi is but a fictional entity. It has been observed, however, that Narayan has faithfully drawn from the pressures and the compulsions of Indian life more particularly of the past seven decades in the writing of his novels. That makes his literary career spread over the last four decades both meaningful and impressive. Though this achievement may call for him the title: 'a social historian' it becomes, at the same time, an essential aspect of his authenticity as an artist. Narayan's social awareness as part of his artistic quality has been amply demonstrated through his fiction. Narayan's fiction has relevance and utility both for the Indian as also for the foreigner. Finally gives an important note that Narayan is not a cornuted artist. He does not aim to make his fiction a tool for

social reformation. With the artist's approach to social change that he has developed one can observe that Narayan refuses to take sides. He neither violently opposes social change nor hails it as a millennium come. Serious satire as a weapon directed to social correction is absent in Narayan; all along he projects himself as an observer; the consequent irony is so compelling that it is mistaken for satire by some readers. His is only an artistic catalogue of life around for the benefit of his countrymen and those abroad. All the same as a conscientious citizen of his country he does sympathize, though quietly, with the young and the old and there are occasions during the comic criticism of the Indian society when angry remarks are made by him.

R K Narayan a study in fictional realism:¹⁴ Thirumurthy observes and says Narayan as a master craftsman knows that art should be pleasing before it is realistic. He has proved that in spite of its insistence on verisimilitude, fiction remains larger than life. His stories though based on realities of life are essentially delightful. He has realized the fact that any successful fiction is impossible without storytelling of some kind. Therefore, his novels though based on realities of life are basically delightful stories. So, it can be said that from realism to a harmonious blend of realism and fantasy, and finally to more of fabulation is the pattern of the development of fictional realism Narayan's novels. And finally conclude that Narayan, among the major Indian writers of English fiction knows very well to exploit the technique of fictional realism to serve his end, namely to keep his readers happy. But, he never degenerates into escapist fantasist to delight his readers. He knows the art of blending the serious and the entertaining. Where others might have produced either serious or entertaining novels, Narayan mixes both of them and makes his readers delightfully serious. This he achieves by fictional realism. Through this technique he bridges the gap between entertainment and serious art form. In fact, he has made it so unique for himself that a proper appreciation of Narayan is well high impossible without awareness of the technique of fictional realism in him.

Sociological changes as evident in the works of R K Narayan:¹⁵ Satya sankar Misra asserts that sociological changes come to operate in the fictional works of R.K.Narayan, the Indo-Anglian novelist. He attempts to analyze the works of Narayan one probably would not fail to trace a parallelism maintained between the author's choice of a subject matter and its subsequent placement against a milieu well-known for a characteristic placidity of its own. Yet such placidity or remoteness persists in the bulk of his works not without an intrusion or environmental variation. Despite the author's assertion of himself being only a story—teller as recorded by interviewers or editors one might as well come to find out a few sociological changes that he himself has felt, seen or experienced within the limits of his religion and family mentioned earlier. Thus sociological changes, as spelt out by him, are more or less sporadic phenomena in *or* around Malgudi that the author intends to set as an archetypal model before his own people, who as such could not chalk out a decisive code of conduct for themselves, vacillating between a craze for imitation and an abrupt sense of reality or contemporaneity both before and following Independence. Finally, states that 'Narayan's treatment of sociological changes helps one understand his innate faith in maintaining a metaphysical rigidity of the spirit of Indianness, which he attempts to establish throughout. The references made to various theories of sociological change, as defined and explained in connection with his novels or short stories earlier, more or less provide a background to the author's own sociological treatment of theme or characterization.

R K Narayan and the idea of the nation:¹⁶ Ramyabrata's goals of her research project were to study the idea of the nation in R.K.Narayan's work, and, more importantly, to determine the role it plays in serving the postcolonial agenda of destabilizing the power of Eurocentric literary discourse and of asserting the marginalized narrative practices as a counter-discursive strategy. The special frames of reference for this study were R.K. Narayan's novels with a historical division—Narayan's pre-independence novels and Narayan's post-independence novels. By closely examining the texts, the nature of nationhood in each of them

was explored, and how the idea of nation helps these texts function as nationalistic discourses was identified. The thesis tries to identify the principles underlying the idea of nation and nationalism, and also the goals that Narayan's fictional world is trying to achieve through the use of this special theory. This theory of discourse, though Eurocentric in origin, resists the colonialist representation of India, and offers alternative representations with a glorification of the past. National narratives—or the stories that nations tell to connect their past, present and future—are powerful and necessary tools in shaping national identity. Within such narratives, the 'nation' as a concept may often appear to rely heavily on an essentialised narrative that seeks to homogenize diversity as a strand of coherent unity. Finally, she confines that Narayan is, thus, deeply entrenched in the nation and nationhood which is rendered clearer once one witnesses the originality of the texts, the attitude of characters, the ideals of the protagonists or the reactions of the Malgudians in a particular situation or a context. A reading of his novels unleashes the spontaneous flow of nationalistic views of the writer. His novels offer us an insight into the great theoretical doctrine of nation and nationalism.

*A study of myth realism topography and higher dimensional concepts in select novels of r k Narayan:*¹⁷ Sindhu analysis in her theses that Narayan portrays his characters according to a certain formula. Inflation in his characters is followed by deflation. Narayan's characters remain captive of their circumstances even though they make a faint and feeble attempt at self-determination. He is a master of realism and anguish. His characters and situations, incidents and episodes, are real and true to daily life is the central theme of Narayan's fiction. He portrays life as a mighty force to which man has to bow, willingly or unwillingly, his head ultimately and accept it. The achievement of Narayan is that he effortlessly sustains below the selfish current of the clownish, an undercurrent of stainless splendour. He transforms the actual world in which he lives into the imaginary world of Malgudi. Thus drawing attention to the topography of the Malgudi world – a world where human drama is enacted by various fictional characters, Malgudi represents the society or world at large, being a microcosm of the macrocosm.

Finally traces that the entirety of the higher dimensional concepts established by R.K.Narayan in his novels culminate in inducing the reader to ultimately question his own eternal existence and his relationship with the external world. In a subtle manner, Narayanan delineates an eternal unquestionable picture of every individual. Every human being if he zooms out of his day today mundane hustle and bustle and inspects his life with a bird's eye view is surely in for a surprise. The true self being eternal is performing activities totally incompatible to his constitutional state. This is the awareness R.K.Narayan is trying to achieve and in turn deliver it to his readers. With regard to the Soul body concept one can come across many passages from Narayan's novels which vehemently try to wake up the readers to the truth about life. One may question about the necessity, for such an awakening.

*Cultural awareness in the feminine characters of R K Narayan's fiction:*¹⁸ According to Kalpana Paul Narayan's characters move about in a socio-cultural environment which includes economic compulsions, family and personal ties, sociopolitical surroundings, religious and cultural traditions, the influence of modernity on the present, and the impact of the West on the East. Narayan is rooted in the ancient Hindu religion, a religion that attaches importance to self-discipline, renunciation, incarnation, the doctrine of rebirth, the law of karma, and non-violence. An ancient myth or legend provides him to express his vision of modern life. This tendency grew more prominent as he crossed the fiftieth year of his life. She well depicts step by step in her theses that The spirit of Hinduism, The use of myth and legend, The Hindu joint family, Varnashrama, The role of horoscopes, Woman's proper place : home and hearth, Man-woman relationship, Cultural ambivalence, Daughter-in-law : the traditional reception, The status and treatment of the elderly, Tyaga and tapasya, Distinction between detachment and renunciation, The pretence of sainthood, Pseudo-sanyasi, Authentic sanyas, Gandhi and Gandhism, Philosophy of life in the novels of Narayan. Finally traces that Narayan writes for his readers, and not for critics and research scholars. His novels represent the middle class. It satisfies him to be called social realist. He

explores the darkest recesses in the minds of his characters. He investigates their psyche when it is divided against itself. He rejects sexual aberrations. He is all for leading a normal life and cherishing the traditional values.

A typological study of characters in R K Narayan's novels:¹⁹ Umesh has made an attempt to analyse the typology of the characters that R.K.Narayan has created in his novels. In the process, this study has traced the evolution of the writer and his genius in character portrayal. It is noted that although Narayan enjoys a general critical consensus as a comic-ironist, his critics often register a note of dissent as regards his unchanging and undeveloping characters. It is also pointed out that the Forsterian terms (flat and round) the other western parameters and even the existing Narayan criticism, although helpful to a certain extent, remain inadequate to fully deal with the pre-ordainedly conceived and traditionally realized Narayan characters. The foregoing analysis of Narayan's characters through the four typological frames has brought into light several findings related especially to (a) Narayan's delineation of characters, (b) different strategies to realize the character's roles and finally (c) the emerging world-view of the novelist. Taken in its entirety the typological study may help one to deduce certain conclusion relating to the craft of Narayan, especially, his characterization. Finally, he confines that the typological approach notes illusion versus reality as the recurring theme of almost every Narayan novel. The theme of mistaken identity is realized through the characteristic role the Narayan protagonist plays against the background of the essentially sacrosanct tradition. Most importantly, the strategy of rite de passage seems to underline the symbolically suggested growth of the deviating protagonists. The growth may be discerned in the recurring theme of the Malgudi novels: the return of the native. In short, the typological approach may be regarded as a strategy to focus on the essentials in the craft of Narayan's novel. What stands out in the end is the essentials seem to have been reflected in Narayan's presentation of the epic of the ordinary conceived on the stage of the middle-class Malgudi, in his bifocal vision of comic irony perceiving the

essentially illusory nature of life, and in his positive vision of life despite its predestinate or karmaic conception.

R K Narayan's fiction a postcolonial study:²⁰ Rajappa has made a closer analysis of Malgudi yields a better understanding of Narayan's attitude to India and the factors shape his idea of India as it is found in his works. The main theme that has driven this thesis is the nature of relationship between Narayan and the land that occupies his creative consciousness. Narayan defines the notion of India through his elaborate and detailed construction of Malgudi over a period of more than fifty years. The imagined space of nation comes into existence through a range of cultural texts. The emergence of the Indian nation has depended on its fictionalization and mythic construction. Resistance to cultural domination has one of the most defining determinants of colonial and postcolonial writing. It is challenging to discover the patterns of affiliation in Narayan that prevents us from defining his writing in political terms. Malgudi is a determinedly pre-independent Indian village that reluctantly retains its basic ideological formative traces unto Narayan's last work. The thesis has tried to argue that cultural subversion is active at substratum of Narayan's works, though it is not supportive of nationalist interests in the real sense of the word. Yet, traditional and postcolonial critics are bent upon establishing a strong strap between Narayan and anti-colonial resistance. The imagined space like Malgudi its hyperrealist socio-cultural exclusivity and insularity fails to emerge a microcosmic India in the true sense of the concept.

Traditional roots of vision in the novels of R K Narayan and Raja Rao:²¹ Krishnamoorthy has made an attempt to locate the position of Indo-Anglo fiction in the milieu of Indian literature, to recognise the Indianness of the alien language - English, to suggest how both R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao stand apart from the rest and jealously guard the-'Indian tradition, to seek an answer to the vexed question - "what is tradition?", to probe into the nature of the traditional way of life and culture in the South to identify the distinctive way of life and tradition of South India, to learn the historical background in moulding the outlook of South

India, to find out the continuity of that rich tradition even in the modern India, to throw light on the indebtedness and contribution of R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao to the tradition by going through their biographies briefly, and to cull three best novels of each R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao for an indepth study with a view to tracing their artistic achievements to the timeless tradition. Finally concludes that, attempt to find out the oneness and the difference, in other words, unity and difference between R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao in their mode of thinking, their style of working their influences and their being moulded and guided by tradition.

Change and continuity in R K Narayan's vision of a milieu during a period of transition:²² In the dissertation *Change and Continuity in R.K. Narayan's Vision of a Milieu During a Period of Transition*, Rijula Mitra's endeavour has been to assess the socio-economic changes that were taking place in a period spanning from 1935 to 1996 as all Narayan's novels were written during this period, and to see it in the light of the eternal values that have come down to us through the centuries. It is important to see that these values as a part of determining the identity of an Indian and whatever the nature of change, these principles cannot be eliminated completely from our way of lives. This, research scholar has termed, in his thesis as 'continuity' and he used the term 'transition', as this period was a time that India saw the birth of two nations and the aftermath was to leave everyone severely traumatized. This period also saw the nation pass through a number of wars with the economy taking a hit due to which we find soaring inflation and the need to take foreign aid. This 'continuity' would be the common thread that strung up all the stories in Narayan's novels and proved to be the philosophy underlying his vision. It is often assumed that continuity means conservatism but in Narayan this is not so. It is, in this context, that he had tried to present Narayan's vision, as it was to play out in an area of his imagination, in a place called Malgudi. The enduring quality of Narayan is the total lack of pretentiousness or the desire to be an activist writer. He never failed to write in simple but effective English reminiscent of his journalism days to entertain his readers. In spite of having no flamboyance or critical acclaim, he has been able to build a band of faithful and

ardent. This is a singular achievement of R.K. Narayan and it is our pride that he is now one of the most widely read Indian writers.

R K Narayan search for roots and identity:²³ Arun Kumar Mukhopadhyay describes the search of roots and identity in R.K.Narayan in his theses. Incidentally, Narayan's novels turn out to be distinctive culture-texts where the search for identity in the principal characters shows a journey through certain modes of experiences characterised by a tension between the stronghold of tradition and the impacts of modernity. The critical focus of this dissertation is specifically on four major novels of Narayan where the search for identity in the characters emerges to be the most prominent and decisive one in their cultural re-making of the 'self'. The present dissertation has sought to contextualise the central problematic of roots and identity in relation to Narayan's presentation of characters. Finally concludes that in R.K.Narayan's novels, Malgudi and men offer a fictional universe where individuals are seen to negotiate a co-existence of native and Western cultural principles and attitudes. The protagonists' search for identity through native cultural roots reflects a problematisation of space as well as an alterity in subject-position that responds much to the postcolonial search for self-definition or a discourse of a search for identity. This dissertation attempts to be a humble contribution to the new world of Narayan criticism that, emerging in the wake of the birth centenary of R.K.Narayan, seeks to revisit his Malgudi with a new look and re-situate his fictional world into perspectives yet unexplored.

R K Narayan's India chronicling social and economic changes:²⁴ In the thesis of Leena Sarkar, the discussion considers several aspects of pre independence and post independence period. Since the topic is R. K. Narayan's India chronicling social and economic changes, the period taken under consideration is 1937-1976. The thesis attempts to draw a neat structure considering the variables of post and pre independent India. The journey starts from 1937 when the author steeped in the ethos of traditionalism writes *The Bachelor of Arts*. The novel is analysed from two perspectives- social inhibitions and how the protagonist struggles to break the shackles of superstition and rigidity. Ultimately he succumbs to the norms of the

society and the analysis tries to focus on the gradual development of the artist through the Varnashramadharma. In this manner in all the novels taken under the purview of discussion, the focus is on the tangible socio-economic changes visualized and perceived in the discourse. The discussion in the entire thesis proves the fact that R.K.Narayan although always praised for eulogizing the human relationships and ironic vision in his novels, is also influenced by the economic theories of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru in delineating the socioeconomic transformations of the microcosmic world of Malgudi and the nation in the wider context.

The theme of attachment-detachment as the leit motif of Indian fiction in English with special reference to R K Narayan:²⁵ Shagufta Anjum shows that R.K. Narayan is completely different from his contemporaries. Raja Rao who imposes philosophy. On the other hand, Anand, who is a propagandist raises his voice against the evils of the society and shows clearly that he is fighting for the welfare of downtrodden. But Narayan is a very simple writer. He does not force his readers to a mode of high philosophy because he does not deal with the situations or events to eke out a hidden philosophic point. Narayan was Indian in thought and spirit and their complexities as they prevail in India, with an insider's confidence. He successfully presented human relationships. R.K. Narayan's power of creative imagination remained fresh even at the age of ninety. According to Narayan there is no need to go to forest to be a Sanyasi for the real attachments. But final attachment with God is possible when we lead a life full of responsibilities before reaching the goal of final attachment after passing through the different stages of life with divinity. *Bhramcharya, Grhastha, Vanprastha* and *Sanyasa Ashram*. The simplicity of R.K. Naryan's style reflects the simple uncluttered personality of the writer. His ideas are open and not covered with any philosophic mists. Narayan is not over burdened with the consciousness that he is writing about the teaching of Mahakavyas, *Ramayana, Mahabharatha* and *Bhagwad Gita* etc. His philosophic vision is completely internalized. His ideas come spontaneously. R.K. Narayan does not see himself as a teacher. The theory

of *Karma*, *Moksha* and detachment- attachment are not presented with any pomposity nor is the cryptic philosophic idiom ever used by him. Here is a writer, simple, artless and natural. A genuine story teller, his stories have the perennial value of the bedside purifying nightcap and lull the readers into a whimsical, ruminative mood where philosophy and gently worded satire prod us into seeing our own follies reflected in the unfolding of the narratives. 134786

A sociolinguistic approach to R K Narayan s fiction:²⁶ Gopinathan observes Sociolinguistic competence knows how to use and respond to language appropriately, given the setting, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating. Discourse competence knows how to interpret the larger context and how to construct longer stretches of language so that the parts make up a coherent whole. Strategic competence knows how to recognize and repair communication breakdowns, how to work around gaps in one's knowledge of the language, and how to learn more about the language and in the context. R.K. Narayan, no doubt, strictly adheres and par excels in all these four areas as a fiction writer. As this study focuses on the third area of sociolinguistics, the aspects of the other three are left at this point inconclusive. R.K used language in contexts of communication bound with culture in multiple and complex ways. His character's express facts, ideas or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of knowledge about the world of culture that other people share. When R. K. writes his points of view, they are also shared by the readers. So in a way, what R. K. has done is an expression of cultural reality. This study offers further scope for research in sociolinguistics under other various fields. But as this particular study has to come to an end, it has to be concluded. To categorise him at the end of this study in a nutshell is that, among the Indian Writers in English, R. K. Narayan is a special one with a difference. It is difficult to classify him as an Indo-Anglican writer. His writings are not merely Indian Writings in English but Indian Culture in English; Indian cultural 'manna' in a labeled English whisky bottle. Though this researcher labels it as English by the total outlook, the content inside is purely Indian culture. His uniqueness is that he is a creator; language of

R. K. itself is a creation. So it can be called R. K. Style. His style is not Indo-Anglican; it is R. K. Style in Indo-Anglican fiction.

Local life depicted in the novels of Vaikom Muhammed Basheer and R K Narayan a comparative study:²⁷ Aboobacker despite the cultural variations and language differences human beings are one and the same basically. Their pains are alike and so are their pleasures. Any piece of literature that reflects the basic aspects of human nature authentically and elegantly so as to stir the minds of readers everywhere is definitely a classic work. And a writer who succeeds in depicting human pathos, foibles, follies and pleasures realistically is a great writer indeed. So, he suggests us to delve deeper into the works of Narayan and Basheer you find that transgressing the frame work of Indianness they have some universal dimensions. Some of their leading characters have kinship with characters in various foreign literatures. In other words, both these writers have delineated a number of universal characters and dealt with some basic universal situations. In short, remaining rooted to their respective soils Narayan and Basheer have tried to tell the stories of their own people, and while doing so they have depicted the basic aspects of human nature authentically and elegantly so as to stir the minds of readers everywhere. Both these writers have delineated universally acceptable characters and portrayed human pleasures and predicaments quite realistically.

Values through Literature A Study of Indian Values in the Selected Novels of R K Narayan:²⁸ Kavitha uphold that an amateur, unperceptive reader of Narayan may often be enticed by the blatant ease of his thematic concerns manifested by his distinctive comic narrative mode. The humdrum commonalities of the Malgudian life illustrated by Narayan and the plainness of thematic anxiety give a non-serious tone to his fiction. However, there is a profound undercurrent of values discourse in his fiction, inter-related with social, cultural, religious and ethical disciplines. Narayan's works absolutely stand for values that are meritorious and needed for both men and society. Social, cultural and ethical values are mainly dealt with in his works. Only these values share other values like educational values, political values, economical values, spiritual values and the

rituals to be followed in life for a successful tune in modern age. Narayan's ideals are an admirable mixture of what he is innate from his own Hindu culture and what has been incorporated from his experience to the western life and literature. He has always been claimed as a novelist par excellence in matters of social criticism of India. But few have been in print on how Narayan integrates the profoundest Indian belief, philosophies and spiritualism in common and theory of values in particular, in his novels. Hence, the fiction of R. K. Narayan reflects Indian values as such in three dimensions of social, cultural and ethical perspectives, and consequently insists upon the importance of value education to the world in general to make everyone a value—based global citizen.

***The village in narratives a study of the representations of rurality in selected novels of Mulk Raj Anand R K Narayan Raja Rao and Kamala Markandaya:*²⁹**

Bose Joseph made an attempt to present the Indian fictional villages in the light of sociological definitions and analysis. At the outset, an in-depth study of the real village was conducted and the results categorized. Armed with such knowledge, a path was cut into the fictional village and its precincts carefully examined. The study thus made also revealed the life of the inhabitants of this rurality. Thus, two types of villages were encountered; one the actual, historical village described in the texts of history, economics, sociology, and so on. The other was what may be termed a 'literary' village, seen primarily in Indian English fiction. Bearing in mind the results of the sociological study of the real villages, the fictional villages, as they appear in the novels of Anand, Narayan, Rao and Markandaya, were approached. Most of the novels of these writers are in fact village novels and these fictional villages were analysed in the light of the pertinent information from the selected works of these authors. The same parameters that were used to study the real villages were also used in analysing the villages in the novels. Thus, the village was analysed as physical, social and conceptual entities respectively. The village was viewed as a social or lived space. It was found that the four writers, while mentioning the different basic aspects of the village society gave emphasis to certain particularities. Finally confines that, these novels remain fictional

historic texts or documents parallel to actual historical documents. They provide exhaustive insights about the villages and the life in the villages. The intrinsic value of these novels lies in the fact that they are chronicles of rural life with an amply magnified experiential dimension that brings out the different contours of the villages and the life therein. Thus, the reader has the experience of fiction becoming history through them.

***A critical study of R K Narayans fiction with special reference to local colour:*³⁰**

Suresh Chandra endeavoured to highlight a critical study of R.K.Narayan's fiction and the element of local colour featuring in his works. The world of Narayan's fiction is relatively free from the terrible privations and agonies, political conflicts and economic depression. This researcher had given a brief account of Indo-Anglian fiction and pointed out how R.K.Narayan had been written for the last fifty years with equal courage and vitality. Among his contemporary writers it is only Narayan who has remained a full time author having no ulterior motive. This researcher also explores Narayan's serenity in his writing, fiction mode inclusive of sex, violence, racial animosity, communalism and parochialism, characterization and the texture of his prose, and the element of local colour and the hypothetical region of Malgudi. Finally, in assessment, R.K.Narayan comes out as a philosopher who has given a philosophical vision of India and has pointed out time and again that the best way for our country lies in blending the East and the West with discernment and understanding. Thus, Narayan spreads the message of synthetic philosophy like the great seers of the past who laid emphasis on unity in diversity.

Available sources clearly say that various research activities undertaken to unearth the various aspects of R.K.Narayan's literature social perspectives, characterization, comparative studies with Indian English writers and many more aspects were studied in detail by many scholars. Apart from this more than 120 Ph.D. theses were awarded by various universities of India. Many of theses are yet to publish. So far my knowledge and available sources is concerned no one has focused on nativism in R.K.Narayan's literature. His literary world is south India;

this place is well known for its significant native tradition, native culture, native language, dialects and many more things. Hence I felt it would be excellent if I project our nativity in his works, particularly in his novels.

NATIVITY DEPICTION IN KANNADA LITERATURE

When I am studying native aspects in R.K.Narayans Novels, I felt that it may be necessary to quote few words about my native writers who contributed lot to enrich Kannada literature by using native aspects.

Here as a priority, as per my knowledge is concerned, I have taken four novels as regional novels in kannada literature by regional writers like Kuvempu, Shivaram Karanth, Rao Bahaddur, Chaduranga. The house of Kanooru, Return to Earth, Gramayana and Vaishakha. These regional writers also wrote regional novels, which were famous as well as Malgudi, these novels are mouth piece to the readers which portrays the uniqueness of the region, nature, customs, traditions etc.

Let us have a brief note on each novel:

The house of Kanooru³¹ by Kuvempu in 1934 was an epic novel, which are rightly acclaimed by critics as modern classics. Certainly even today few novels in Kannada can match for the grand sweep of his narratives, the minutely observed and vividly recreated descriptions of nature and the warm and pulsating feel of lived experience. Novels deal with the life in Malenadu, the thickly wooded regions of the Western Ghats, where the writer spent his childhood and youth in the early decades of the century.

A village literally meant an isolated manor occupied by the large family of the landlord (usually a Vokkaliga by caste) and his innumerable dependants and surrounded by the hutments of his serfs. Daily life, death and disease, fear of spirits and witchcraft, lending itself to easy exploitation by the priests, monsoons, women and children were utterly dependent on patriarchal protection and therefore vulnerable to abuse and violence all were depicted in the novel.

Novel can show three stages, first, it attempts to come to a historical understanding of the rich ecological and sociological material at writer's disposal. Then there is the exploration of the personality of Hoovayya, the central consciousness of the novel- his aesthetic aspirations, his spiritual search, his moral dilemmas and finally his conflicts with his society. Third, there is an analysis of the relationship between nature and refinement which provides the novel with its philosophical moorings.

Secondly, **The Return to earth**³²(Marali Mannige) by Shivaram Karanth in 1941, the novel was achieved the status of a great classic of Kannada fiction. By an unusual critical consensus and with an intimate reception by readers it became a landmark in the territory of Kannada sensibility. It draws the reader into its vast design, its authentic and self-contained fictional cosmos so, that s/he becomes its inhabitant, in escapably involved in the predicament and the destiny of its characters. It has the sweep and even the audacity to imitate the broad and slow rhythms of life, like similar works of great realism in all literatures. The narration is patient and unhurried. It tells us about three generation of characters who wage an unrelenting struggle against necessity which here takes the shape of poverty. This is the poverty of a Brahmin family in kodi, a tiny hamlet on the Dakshina Kannada coast (western coast of Karnataka state) where the rains, the sea and the river allow only a "mean" existence, testing human endurance and capacity to survive.

The patriarchal, miserly and representative of the first generation, Rama *Aithala* is a 'loukik', a this-worldly man, so deeply involved in the mud and storms of this existence that there is hardly and glimpse of anything that transcends it in his life. He therefore wants his son lachcha to be his pawn the new world of English education, well-paid professions and money. Modernity can be called a persistent paradigm in Kannada literature; in this novel, it's fascinating ambivalence troubles *Aithala*. It is a moral ambiguous new world in which he wants his son to succeed where the rigid and unambiguous religious codes and social mores have been replaced by the amorphous notions of money and success.

Thirdly, **The Gramayana**³³ (The saga of a village) by *Rao Bahaddur* in 1957 is the story of the decay and disintegration of a typical village in the North West corner of the Kannada country. Since its publication, the novel has evoked an amount of academic discussion which few other books can match. It has all the powers and weakness of a spontaneous growth in nature. It is literally the story of a village and not of any individual. Individuals are there as there are trees in the woods. But the centre of the story is not any of them but the forest itself. The moving forces of the story are floods, famines and plagues and above all, human follies. We may claim to have mastered floods, famines and plagues, but not the follies of men and women.

The novel closely follows the form of an epic as is suggested by the title of the novel-Gramayana. What it lacks is the element of heroism and the pride of aristocracy. But the narrative mode is that of an epic involving two scales of time, one of history and another of the narration. The images which the novel creates and perfects are realistic, unlike these of the epic. An image like that of a lacquer-house in the Mahabharata in a realistic novel. It is a house but not a dwelling, a house which is not meant for living but a house which kills once it is burnt. It becomes an anti-image. A novel bound to be realistic, but it uses its realistic images in the same way as the epic uses.

Gramayana is a great work because, it seems, it presents a vision of life, the concrete reality of which is threatened by something which is unknown and unexpected. Only two persons in the novel willingly face fire ordeal and water ordeal but one doesn't know what they experienced or achieved, since they meet their ordeal when their consciousness is shattered to pieces. Their death is not even tragic because the tragic hero talks up to the last moment of his life. These two deaths in the novel reveal the void between the sparks of life, sparks which are too weak to illumine the darkness of nothingness. The serpent eating its tail disappears, a truly spiritual vision.

Finally, **Vaishaka**³⁴ (The Tale of Lakka) by *Chaduranga* in 1981 is the novel of a bit stodgy and incident heavy in its weave. Yet in its blending of complexity of detail and vitality of theme, in its delight fully graphic depiction of village Karnataka and finally in its suggestion that there is a way out of the claustrophobia of caste, it is a contribution to Kannada and Indian literature.

Vaishakha presents a variety of man-woman relationships but it is not a novel about sense or love, as some critics of the novel have assumed it to be, similarly, though the novel is set against a fully realized rural setting, it would be wrong set against a fully realized rural setting it would be wrong to treat it as a specimen of the regional novel. Its central focus is on the growth in the consciousness of a young *dalit* called *Lakka* and his struggle to regain his lost innocence in a corrupt environment. It is essential to recognize this fact in order to be able to grasp the true nature of the relationships among the characters, events and the atmosphere in the novel. Otherwise the reader is likely to come to the wrong conclusion that the novel has no central focus or that it is merely a documentation of the life of a rural community.

Vaishakha is highly experimental in its use of fictional technique and language. Though it is true that it is the growth of awareness in *Lakka's* mind and his search for lost innocence constitute the internal action of the novel, it is important to see that the total perspective of the novel is larger than *Lakka's* consciousness. This perspective includes a carefully constructed outer reality and enables the novelist to overcome the dangers which lyrical novels usually face. There is, however, no rupture between the outer and the inner realities in this novel because of their strong mutual involvement.

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CHAPTER 3

LIFE SKETCH OF R. K. NARAYAN AND HIS CONTRIBUTION

There are writers - Tolstoy and Henry James to name two - whom we hold in awe, writers – Turgenev and Chekhov – for whom we feel a personal affection, other writers whom we respect – Conrad for example – but who hold us at a long arm's length with their "Country foreign grace". Narayan (whom I don't hesitate to name in such a context) more than any of them 100 wakes in me a spring of gratitude, for who has offered me a second home. Without him I could never have known what it is like to be Indian.¹

–Graham Greene

R. K. Narayan... has been compared to Gogol in England, where he has acquired a well-deserved reputation. The comparison is apt, of Narayan, an Indian, is a writer of Gogol's stature, with the same gift for creating a provincial atmosphere in a time of change... One is convincingly involved in his alien world without ever being aware of the technical devices Narayan so brilliantly employs.²

-Anthony West

R. K. Narayan is the genial, smiling face of postcolonialism without exhibiting the anger, resentment or assertive self-consciousness of cultural nationalism; he is still a representative postcolonial writer in another way... Though he writes good English and is perfectly at ease with his medium, his basic Indianness is revealed at every turn through his use of themes, vocabulary, proverbs, place and last but not least, use of myths which imparts an additional dimension to his novel.³

-Rama Kunda

Graham Greene, Anthony West and Rama Kunda have written about Narayan's brilliance, good English and his capacity of creativity.

R.K. Narayan stood as one among three leading literates of Indian writing in English, along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. He was born in Chennai on October 10, 1906. His full name is Rasipuram Krishnaswami Ayyar Naranayanaswami. In the beginning he signed his name as R. K. Narayanaswami, but apparently at the time of the publication of *Swami and Friends*, he shortened it to R. K. Narayan on Graham Greene's suggestion. It is the custom in the south: R stands for the name of the village Rasipuram of Salem district to which his family belonged, K stands for the name of his father Krishnaswami Iyer and the full form of Narayan is Narayanaswami.

Here is the detailed sketch of his domestic life along with social, academic and literary career as viewed in his memoir, *My Days* and other accessible sources: His father Krishnaswami Iyer was a school headmaster. Narayan could receive some of his education at his father's school. As his father's job required frequent moves, Narayan spent part of his childhood under the care of his maternal grandmother named Parvathi. His grandmother gave him the nickname of *Kunjappa*. She taught him arithmetic, mythology, classical Indian music and Sanskrit. Looking to his schooling career, Narayan while living with his grandmother, studied at schools in Madras, as well as the Lutheran Mission School in Purasawalkam, C.R.C. High School, and the Christian College High School. Narayan was considered an enthusiastic reader as his early reading covers the eminent writers like Dickens, Wodehouse, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Thomas Hardy. It has also been observed that when Narayan was twelve years old, he participated in a pro-independence march, for which he was reprimanded by his uncle; the family was apolitical and considered all governments wicked. It has also been viewed that, Narayan was not so clever as a student. He failed both in the High School and Intermediate examination. He took four years to obtain his B.A. Degree. After taking graduation from Maharaja College, Mysore, he was called upon to contribute to the family income, so he started working as a clerk in the secretariat of Mysore for some time, but could not manage this profession very long. He quit the job as a teacher in protest when the headmaster asked him to

substitute for the physical training master. His ambition was to become a writer, so he decided to devote all his time to writing. He is first man who decided to spend his lively hood by writing. His first published work was a book review of the *Development of Maritime Laws of 17th century England*. Later on he attempted his hand in writing the local interest story for English newspaper and magazines. In the year 1930 Narayan wrote his first novel *Swami and Friends*, although his effort was ridiculed by his uncle and publishers too rejected the novel. Through his novels, Narayan created a imaginary town Malgudi, which artistically replicated the social sphere of the nation. In his fictitious Malgudi milieu, he favours the native culture, and has disapproved certain limits enforced by colonial rule. He also traces the socio-political changes of British and post-independent phase in his novels. While enjoying vacation at his sister's house in Coimbatore, in 1933, he came into contact with Rajam, he fell in love in first sight with her. His proposal to marry Rajam was not granted by her father because their horoscope did not tally. Still he managed to get permission from his father-in-law. Such experiences are already mirrored in a number of his novels and short stories. After marriage, he became a reporter for a Madras based paper called 'The Justice', dedicated to the rights of non-Brahmins. This career offered him an opportunity to meet a wide variety of people and their issues. His married life was quite satisfactory. One daughter Hema was born to them. Meanwhile, his three novels *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) and *The Dark Room* (1938), published in quick succession. The publications confirmed his popularity and brought him fame as well as money. After five years of their marriage in 1939 his wife Rajam diseased by typhoid. It was a great shock to Narayan. Rajam's death affected him deeply and it was a shattering experience for him. After her death for about six years he did not write any novel. It was a period of deep anguish and introspection during which he edited only a journal 'Indian Thought' and published three volumes of short stories: *Malgudi Days* (1941), *Dodu and Other stories* (1943), and *Cyclone and other stories* (1944). His novel *The English Teacher* was published in 1945 since then the flow of his novel-writing started incessantly at the rate of one book every two years. His next effort *Mr. Sampath* (1949) marks with a

more imaginative and external style. *The Financial Expert* (1952) is considered his masterpiece and hailed as the most original works of fiction. His next novel *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) focuses on Indian Independence Movement. His works have been published both in England and USA. He is regarded next only to Faulkner and Graham Greene in America. It has also been viewed that like most south Indian Brahmin, Narayan did not eat meat nor like alcohol, but unlike them he had no objection to eggs. He knew two languages: Tamil and English, and could manage to understand Kannada. He dressed simply in dhoti and kurta. While surveying his daily routine, it has also been studied that in the morning he used to meet and talk with lawyers, traders, artisans and teachers and worked in the afternoons after lunch, for three or four hours, writing on an average; about 2000 words every day. His creative career lasted for almost seven decades. He wrote novels, novellas, stories; travel books; a memoir; columns with causeries, short essays; skits, radio talks as well as edited a journal. He performed the task of teaching courses in universities and in a later stage, he was his own publisher.

Narayan received honours on a substantial scale and won a variety of awards during the course of his literary career. The first major award, which he received, was the Sahitya Academy Award for his novel titled *The Guide* in 1958. When the book was made into a film under the same title, he also received the Film Fare Award for the best story. He received the Padma Bhushan during the Republic Day honours in the year 1964. The British also appreciated his creative talent and was awarded the AC Benson Medal by the (British) Royal Society of Literature in 1980, of which he was an honorary member. In the year 1982 he was elected an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He was also nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature, although never won that honour. Recognition also came to him in the form of honorary doctorates from the University of Leeds (1967), the University of Mysore (1976) and Delhi University (1973). Indian Government too offered its highest status by appointing him for the upper house of the Indian Parliament for a six-year term starting in 1989, especially for his outstanding contributions to Indian literature. During the last

phase of his life in 2000 a year before his death, Narayan was awarded India's second-highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan.

It seems true that postcolonial writing uses the language of the colonists, but adapts it to the discourse of the colonized. Narayan remained the product of a period when English education had already been introduced in the Indian sub-continent. It has been analyzed that “*the study of the English language and literature in the postcolonial context seems to be a densely political and cultural phenomenon*”.⁴ Having received an English education, Narayan preferred to write in English since the beginning of his career. The colonial ambiance might have left its influence on Narayan, but he had preferred the English language in its Indianized form. Iyengar in *Indian Writing in English* notes that Narayan:

*Uses the English language much as we used to wear dhotis manufactured in Lancashire- but the thoughts and feelings, the stirrings of the soul, the wayward movements of the consciousness, are all of the soil of India.*⁵

Maniruzzaman in his article on “*R. K. Narayan’s attitude towards the English Language*” observes that Narayan is seen to have used the English language and literary form to scrutinize colonialism and depict the Indian society continually under change due to the colonial rule. Narayan’s position in this regard is deemed quite ambivalent and complex - he is aware that English is the language of the colonist, yet he is found to have accepted it for practical reasons. That is, his attitude towards the English language appears to have resulted from and shaped by the reality prevailing in the postcolonial setting.⁶

In one of his interviews with William Walsh, Narayan justifies his writings in English:

*I was never aware that I was using a different, a foreign language when I wrote in English, because it came to me very easily. I can’t explain how English is a very adaptable language. And it’s so transparent it can take on the tint of any country.*⁷

Narayan's English is designed with the Indian context and native colour, not the language of the rulers. *Alexander McCall Smith in his 'Introduction' to Narayan's My Days remarks that "Narayan's novels are like a box of Indian sweets: a highly- coloured container conceals a range of delectable treats, all different in a subtle way, but each one clearly from the same place..."*⁸

McCall Smith further clarifies the impact of colonization on writers and locates Narayan's position as devoted Indian in the following observation:

*Colonialism hurt and damaged those subjected to it, but it would be inaccurate to portray the process as being a simple matter of subjugation and humiliation; ...The writer in the colonized country tended to soak up the culture of the colonial power and feel a familiarity and some affection for it, even though the experience of colonialism may have demoralized and destabilized his own colonized culture.... Narayan himself made it, as did others, although some did so by leaving the culture in which they had been brought up. Narayan remained in India – an Indian writer who was happy to be read by those outside India but who remained firmly within the world into which he had been born.*⁹

HERE IS THE DETAILED SKETCH OF NARAYAN'S LITERARY CONTRIBUTION:

THE NOVELS:

- 1 *Swami and Friends* (1935)
- 2 *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937)
- 3 *The Dark Room* (1938)
- 4 *The English Teacher* (1945)
- 5 *Mr.Sampath- The Printer of Malgudi* (1949)
- 6 *The Financial Expert* (1952)
- 7 *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955)
- 8 *The Guide* (1958)
- 9 *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1962)
- 10 *The Vendors of Sweets* (1967)

- 11 *The Painter of Signs* (1976)
- 12 *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983)
- 13 *Talkative Man* (1986)
- 14 *The World of Nagraj* (1990)
- 15 *Grandmother's Tale* (1992)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY:

My Days: A Memoir (1974)

SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS:

Malgudi Days (1943)

Dodu and Other Stories (1943)

Cylone and Other Stories (1945)

An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories (1947)

Lawley Road and Other Stories (1956)

A Horse and Two Goats (1970)

Under the Banyan Trees and Other Stories (1985)

COLLECTION OF STORIES, ESSAY AND SKETCHES:

Next Sunday: Sketches and Essays (1956)

Reluctant Guru (1974)

A Writer's Nightmare: Selected Essays (1988)

A Story- Teller's World (1989)

Salt and Sawdust: Stories and Table Talk (1993)

RETELLINGS OF EPICS AND FOLKLORE:

God, Demons and Others (1964)

The Ramayana (1972)

The Mahabharata (1978)

The Indian Epics Retold (1995)

BRIEF SURVEY OF R. K. NARAYAN'S NOVELS:

Swami and Friends (1935), the first novel by Narayan, and it was at once hailed by competent critics as a great work of art. Graham Greene called it, "*A book in ten thousand*".¹⁰ The novel describes the life of schoolboys in South Indian schools through offering the vivid portrayal and childhood's activities carried out in the form of playing, quarrelling or wandering on the bank river by Swami, the protagonist and his friends Mani: the Dada, Shanker: the most intelligent boy, Somu: the monitor, and Rajam: the son of the police superintendent. The novelist has visualized the child-psychology while rendering the thoughts, emotions and activities of school boys in a slightly comical manner. Swaminathan experiences the subjugation under authoritarian Christian teacher and his strict natured father. M.C.C. (Malgudi Cricket Club) remains his favorite passion. The emotional release, which he seeks from strains and pressures, is his playing cricket and funny adventures accompanied by his friends. The novel focuses on postcolonial aspect of his character. For example, Ebenzer: a fanatic Christian teacher makes a dirty comment on Hindu Gods. Unable to tolerate the Christian missionary operating against Hinduism, Swami loves to leave the school in protest, "*I do not care for your dirty school*".¹¹ The question "*Why was Christ crucified if he was much better than Krishna*".¹² asked by Swami seems Narayan's strict response to colonial representatives advocating mere blaming against Hindu Gods. The chapter '*Monday Morning*' vividly draws the picture of school-going children in Indian education system. Though, little children do not prefer to attend school initially as it puts a ceiling on their childhood pleasure. The certain authoritarian atmosphere in the school generates mental fear over their delicate mentality: "*Swaminathan shuddered at the very thought of school: that dismal yellow building; the fire-eyed Vedanayagam, his class-teacher; and the headmaster with his thin ling cane....*".¹³ Though, such a system of severe punishment of past has no place in the modern educational set up. Modification of the educational system on a major scale is being conducted in its entire framework. Narayan in a speech on '*Cruelty to Children*' to Indian Parliament indicates certain

changes in the Indian schooling system. The Macaulay-made educational frame has been proved slightly upsetting to small kids where children are forced to wear particular uniform, footwear and a number of other things. Narayan notes in his speech that the *'child is groomed and stuffed into a uniform and packed off to school with a loaded bag on his back. The schoolbag has become an inevitable burden for the child'*. Narayan pleads for abolition of the school bag as a national policy, by an ordinance if necessary. He further clarifies that *'the dress regulation, particularly in convent school is another senseless formality- tie and laced shoes and socks, irrespective of the climate, is compulsory ... it's absurd to enforce it on children ... A simple uniform and footwear must be designed and brought into force and these should be easier to maintain'*. Narayan is of the view that childhood needs a change to bloom rather than wilt in the process of learning.¹⁴ Narayan's advocacy over *'education without burden'* has brought some favorable signs in framing up of modern educational policies. Through the character sketches of Swami and his friends in the novel, Narayan seems to be protesting against the British legacy of education system and appeals for certain improvement according to the native set up and environment. Narayan has described his experiences at Lutheran Mission School as a Brahmin boy in his autobiography *My Days*:

*The scripture classes were mostly devoted to attacking and lampooning the Hindu gods and violent abuses were heaped on idol-worshippers as a prelude to glorifying Jesus. Among the non-Christians in our class I was the only Brahmin boy and received special attention; the whole class would turn in my direction when the teacher said that Brahmins claiming to be vegetarians ate fish and meat in secret, in a sneaky way and were responsible for the soaring price of those commodities.*¹⁵

Swami and Mani listen to Gaurishanker: a Gandhian in Khaddar, who delivers his speech: *"We are slaves of slaves... English is no bigger than our Madras Presidency and is inhabited by a handful of white rogues, the English men"*. They declare, *"to boycott English goods, especially of Lancashire and Manchester cloth"* and organize the program: *"the bonfire of foreign clothes"* ¹⁶in

the wake of the Swadeshi movement led by Gandhiji. The chapter *Broken Panes* introduces the Indian Freedom Struggle. Though, Gandhiji's indirect presence is felt at the back of the whole incident. The novel recounts the event happened in India several years ago in a realistic manner. The satire on imagining nations, maps and Europe figures is also communicated in the novel. When Swami is trying to draw a map of Europe: "*It puzzled him how people managed to live in such a crooked country as Europe... How did the map-makers find out what the shape of country was? How did they find out that Europe was like a camel's head?*".¹⁷

Hence, the novel has been considered an autobiographical and hailed from Narayan's personal experience as a boy to school. Narayan's is a real artistry. Certain events happened in his real life (described in his memoirs *My Days*) shown his genuine relationship with his fictional world. Generally, authenticity in literature is judged in context to its credibility. Natural language not written with a controlled vocabulary is considered one of its parameters by critics. Narayan uses language of everyday life without further verbosity or ambiguity. The setting of this novel in Malgudi, purely a country mind of the common man. The novel may be termed as the quest for identity and maturity. Narayan observes: "*In childhood, fears and secrecies and furtive acts happen to be the natural state of life, adopted instinctively for survival in a world dominated by adults. As a result, I believe a child is capable of practicing greater cunning than a grown up*".¹⁸

The more matured work than his earlier novel, *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) deals with the career of a young man, Chandran at the time when he is about to leave college and enters life. The novel is divided into four parts. The first part is divided into five chapters, depicting a vivid account of the college life of the hero, Chandran. He is a brilliant speaker so, Ragavachar, a history professor appointed him as the secretary of the college Historical Association. Though extra-curricular activities generate disturbances in his study, however at least he manages to pass the B.A. Examination. The second part of the novel deals with Chandran's search of a job and his frustrations while facing life-reality. Unable to find a job,

Chandran wastes his valuable moment by mere useless walking on the bank of the river or sleeping for long hours. He falls in love with a beautiful girl Malthi, proposes her to marry, but their horoscopes do not tally. Being disappointed by this incident, Chandran falls ill and confined to bed for several days. The third part of the novel deals with his aimless wandering in Madras wherein he also tempts to visit the house of a prostitute in the company of a degenerate youth. Later on, the peace of Kapaleswar temple attracts him and he turns as a Sanyasi, but seems tired of practicing the difficult role of Sanyasi and finally returns to his parents in Malgudi. The fourth part of the novel shifts towards Chandran's marriage with Susila and his life settled. The novel ends with an optimistic note of life, i.e. when one compromises the situation, all ends well.

The depiction of horoscope in the novel is an aspect of Indian native reality. Chandran shows his hatred for tradition bound caste division and feels that a marriage would not be tolerated, even among sub-sects of the same caste: "*If India was to attain salvation, these watertight divisions must go-community, caste, sects, sub-sects and still further division*".¹⁹ Looking to above views, Narayan has presented a firsthand account of Indian life from within. Chandran's mother views on marriage that "*it is always a matter of destiny: you can marry only the person who you are destined to marry and at the appointed time. When time comes let the ugliest girl, she will look alright to the destined eye*".²⁰ Such views define the popular belief that '*marriages are made in heaven*'. Chandran expresses his clash against the injustice, slavery or distortion of Indian history by the colonial rule. He shows his likeness for the pure image of India and the history of patriots as the makers of India in place of distorted history by the colonial rule. Raghavachar, the nationalist professor of history, expresses his views: "*If he were asked what the country needed most urgently, he would not say self government or economic independence but a classified, purified Indian history*".²¹ In the context of this argument, Narayan mentions the colonial attitude towards Indian historian in one of his essays titled as '*When India was a Colony*': "*Indian history was written by British historians – extremely well documented and researched, but not always*

impartial ... The Black Hole of Calcutta never existed". Narayan adds that when he mentioned this aspect to a distinguished British historian some years ago in London, he brushed aside his observation with: "*I'm sorry; Indians are without a sense of history. Indians are temperamentally non-historical*".²² Hence, Narayan concentrates over colonial's partiality, the annoyance over caste discrimination and native consciousness in the domestic-traditional Indian life.

The Dark Room (1938), the third novel by Narayan, is a lament on the disharmony of domestic life of a tormented housewife named Savitri. Ramani, the office secretary of *Englandia Insurance Company* is authoritarian and distrustful by nature. Savitri, Ramani's wife is a true identity of traditional Indian womanhood. She is fully dedicated to her beloved husband, but Ramani, the patriarch, often rebukes and abuses her. The arrival of Shanta Bai, the widow, who falls in love with Ramani, completely disturbs the marital life of Savitri and Ramani. Savitri protest and revolts against her husband and in desolation leave the house to commit suicide. Though Mari, a blacksmith and burglar comes to her rescue and saves her life. Savitri decides to live an independent life in a temple, but cannot control her feelings of reminiscence and a tormenting anxiety for her children. The affection and attachment with family makes her impatient and finally she returns to her home after realizing the futility of her attempt to escape from patriarchal oppression. Here, Narayan does not suggest any solution to the problem, but focuses on the regretful fate of Indian womanhood. This novel is considered a tragedy of domestic life and disharmony. Narayan has described the Navratri festival as a part of Indian cultural tradition. People celebrate this auspicious festival to honor and praise the Goddess Durga. The religious reference adds the splendor in local colors of the novel. Though mother Durga is worshipped, but the woman (*Nari*) a symbol or form of the Goddess (*Narayani*) is being tortured, is the exposed reality expressed indirectly by the novelist. He also emphasizes the necessity of women's education through Savitri when she confesses the social reality that her incomplete educational career has played a major role in shaping her misfortune. "*If I had gone to a college and studied, I*

might have become a teacher or something”²³ or “I am like a bamboo pole which cannot stand without a wall to support”.²⁴ Economic dependences is her helplessness. The patriarchal structure of society makes her silent. Sudhir Dixit in his article on “*Ibsenite Feminism in Narayan’s The Dark Room*” expresses his views that Narayan could easily have made his Savitri a staunch rebel like Ibsen’s Nora, but the harsh realities of Indian society compel Narayan to make his heroine surrender to its overwhelming pressures”.²⁵ Narayan considers it a form of movement in its early stage: ‘I was somehow *obsessed* with a philosophy of a woman as opposed to man, her constant oppressor. This must have been an early testament of the ‘Women’s Lib’ movement... A wife in an orthodox milieu of Indian society was an ideal victim of such circumstances’.²⁶ Though, Narayan’s attitude towards women has been severely criticized by some critics in contemporary criticism. It has been argued that while developing the initial stage of nation formation, Narayan in order to sustain individual Brahminic favour and preserve the ancestral norms to manage the male hegemonic frame, might have been forced to prevent the status of gender equality in that period. But it is equally true that the present day feminist movement was not at its height in those days and what Narayan could do was his generating sympathy towards the marginalized status of woman in society. It should not be treated mere injustice because he dared to depict at least the naked reality of the contemporary era through voicing the gender inequality.

Narayan’s personal experiences, rather suffering have been transformed into his novel *The English Teacher* (1945). The novel narrates the domestic life of Krishna, who serves as a lecturer in English in the Albert Mission College, Malgudi. His happy married life devastates completely when his better-half Sushila is stung by a flea, develops typhoid and dies after few days unfortunately. The sudden death of his dear wife makes him so upset that he loses all interest in life. The only comfort and compromise to him is his little daughter, Leela. Wondering about a lotus pond, he meets *Sanyasi* who possesses the miraculous power to converse with the spirit of a dead one. Here, Narayan confers the

philosophical discourse over the parapsychology and the mysteries of the world of spirit. Krishna regains his lost interest in life after meeting the headmaster of a new child's school. Overwhelmed by his educational theories, Krishna soon decides to give up his job at the college and readily joins the new institution to render his service. With the help of Sanyasi, Krishna can communicate with the spirit of his dead wife directly. His communication with the dead wife is neither a magic nor a miracle, but actually a means of finding reconciliation with life. The novel is fully autobiographical as Narayan himself confessed in his *My Days*. In the year 1939 his wife Rajam had died of typhoid which devastated Narayan inwardly. He writes:

*I have described this part of my experience of her sickness and death in The English Teacher so fully that I do not and perhaps cannot, go over it again. More than any other book, The English Teacher is autobiographical in content; very little part of it is fiction... The toll that typhoid took and all the desolation that followed, with a child to look after, and the psychic adjustments, are based on my experience.*²⁷

Elizabeth Brown appreciates the novel as:

*"An idyll as delicious as anything I have met in modern literature for a long time. The atmosphere and texture of happiness, and above all, its elusiveness have seldom been so perfectly transcribed".*²⁸

Narayan has woven his theme around Hindu myths through this novel. 'The soul is immortal and ultimately it merges with the divine spirit' is reflected in the second part of *The English Teacher*. It promotes him to gain power to endure. He could accomplish the stage to self-sufficiency and find happiness within. Krishna thinks that his wife has always been with him. Narayan writes: *"Perhaps death may not be the end of everything as it seems – personality may have other structures and other planes of existence, and the decay of the physical body through disease or senility may mean nothing more than a change of vehicle. This outlook may be unscientific, but it helped me survive the death of my wife. I could*

somehow manage to live after death”²⁹. Here, he seems to confirm the philosophical truth over the mortality of human being and perpetuity of soul as per sayings in *Bhagavad-Gita*: “*Vasansi Jirnani Yatha Vihay Navani Gruhnati Naroparani, Tatha Sharirani Vihay Jirnanyanyani Sanyati Navani Dehi*”³⁰, i.e. As a man shedding worn-out garments, takes other new ones, likewise, the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others that are new.

Life under colonial rule seems an essential facet in the novel. The title of the novel itself suggests the influence of the unwelcome ruler. Towards the end of the novel Krishna realizes that his job as an English Teacher is worthless. Krishna believes that English teaching to Indian students is like to feed them on ‘literary garbage’ and the fate of English Teacher in India is like ‘the paid servants of the department of garbage’: “*This education had reduced us to a notion of morons; we were strangers to our own culture and camp followers of another culture, feeding on leavings and garbage*”.³¹ He decides to resign as an English Teacher because colonial system of education is going to attack a whole century of false education.³² Krishna feels that English education has proved ineffective in bringing him solace at the time when required. He realizes that such education has actually placed him far from Indian culture and its educational theories. It is Krishna’s inner self-development. Though he praises the aesthetic value of English literature and has high respect for Mr. Brown, the principal of Albert Mission College and well-known poet, but his opposition towards the British Education is slightly different when he thinks that his (Mr. Brown) western mind will not be able to grab the idea of inner peace in the Indian sense. The Western philosophy demands the scientific evidence of an event like reunion with the spirit of dead one, but Krishna’s feelings require no confirmation.

It seems that Narayan through Krishna’s character shows how the English education system dehumanizes the Indians. To justify his views, Narayan further notes in his essay ‘When India was a Colony’ the influence and attitudes of ICS (now IAS) officer during the colonial phase: “Instead of taking the trouble to understand India and deal directly with the public, Briton transmuted Indians

themselves into Brown Sahibs... They were also educated to carry about them an air of superiority at all times and were expected to keep other Indians at a distance ... the ICS manual was his Bible that warned him against being too familiar with anyone... These men proved ruthless in dealing with agitators ... they were viewed as a monstrous creation of the British. An elder statesman once defined the I.C.S. as being neither Indian nor civil nor service. When Nehru became the Prime Minister, he weeded out many of them.³³ The native residents of India too were forced and trained to remain alienated themselves from their motherland during colonial rule. The intellectual youth was misguided to think the countrymen inferior. Narayan through *English Teacher* exposes the genuine sense of the true education system. The English Teacher, Krishna thinks that he would be converted into a mechanical or materialistic personality and would completely forget the importance of native cultural values, if he continues to be a teacher under British legacy. His conscience awakens him to join the institution where he could find solace and render his service to humanity. Hence, the character sketch of Krishna reflects the postcolonial dimensions in his life philosophy.

The character of Susila distinguishes the humanized form of Indian woman while carrying out her domestic duties. She has been aptly appreciated by Somerset Maugham in his letter to Narayan: *'Your story is charming and moving and curious, but what I think what chiefly delighted me was the description of home life... You cannot imagine how fascinating that is for the European reader. The portrait of Susila is very graceful and touching and very, very human'*.³⁴ Hence, the novel describes the aspects of Indianness, wedded love and familial ties.

Narayan's next effort, *Mr. Sampath: The Printer of Malgudi* (1949) is viewed by Walsh as *'the first book exhibiting modified approach'* as it indirectly focuses on some of his own experiences, particularly the aspect of starting his own journal; he also makes a marked movement away from his earlier novels by intermixing biographical events.³⁵ Srinivas, the protagonist of the novel meets Mr. Sampath, the printer and assigns him the charge to print his weekly journal, *The*

Banner. The strenuous work of editing and publishing of the weekly seizes all his attention, Hence, ignores his family life. Srinivas' negligence of domestic duties generates a disturbance in the family, sometimes quarrels take place, nevertheless they continue their routine life with due compromise. The publication of the weekly is suspended because of Srinivas' own mismanagement and a strike in the press. The breakdown of publication inspires Mr. Sampath to become a film producer. He sets up *the sunrise picture studio* and appoints Srinivas as the script writer, his friend Somu as the financier and Ravi, the young man as the accountant of the company. *The Burning of Kama* is the first film to be produced in which Mr. Sampath acts the role of Shiva and Shanti, the actress as Parvathi. Ultimately, film producing venture also comes to an end while excited Ravi develops uproar on the stage to embrace his idol Shanti. Ravi has gone mad and has been sent to the police lock-up. Srinivas revives the publication of *the Banner* afterward. The financial crisis compels Mr. Sampath to leave Malgudi to escape the notice of his creditors, Somu and others. Finally, Mr. Sampath bids farewell to Srinivas and Shanti. Hence, the novel envisages the enterprising rogue Mr. Sampath placed in the awful dilemma who can face even the most difficult situations. This novel is considered a classic in Indian writings in English as it deals with some serious subjects in comic manner.

The novelist has introduced the spiritual aspect of Indian reality. The historical importance of Malgudi and river Sarayu is visualized with a view to focusing on mythical truth of native Indian culture. The myth of the birth of river Sarayu has been associated with Lord Rama who on his way to a holy river ... rested on a sandy stretch in a grove, and looked about water for his forehead-marking. He pulled an arrow from his quiver and scratched a line on the sand, and water instantly appeared. Thus, was born the river Sarayu.³⁶ Lord Buddha too, came this way, preaching his gospel of compassion, centuries later. The lesson 'mortality of human being' is also preached through the story of a handful of mustard by the Buddha himself in this place. The great Shankara appeared during the next millennium. He saw on the riverbank a cobra spreading its hood and

shielding a spawning frog from the rigour of the midday sun. He remarks: "Here the extremes meet. The cobra, which is the natural enemy of the frog, gives it succour. This is where I must build my temple".³⁷ He installed the goddess there and preached his gospel of *Vedanda*: the identity and oneness of God and His creatures. Narayan perhaps intends to convey the message through such mythical tales that Indian spiritualism emphasizes the philosophy of non-violence, mortality of man and the morale of forgive and forget existed since centuries. The *Vedanta* teaches the mystery of earthly man and his attachment with supernatural beings. Lord Buddha interpreted the philosophy of mortality woven with human life and preached his disciples to pursue the path of truth, knowledge and peace to be relieved from worldly pains: "Buddham Sharanam Gacchami, Shantam Sharanam Gacchami (move towards peace). Hence, looking to the postcolonial context, the novel highlights the genuine perception of Indian civilization and its rich cultural heritage. Though satirical in tone, but the novelist has visualized the mythical significance of certain virtues like restraint and chastity through the incident of 'The Burning of Kama'. The concept of making a film based on mythological truth proves ridiculous while rehearsing the act.

Looking to another appealing aspect of this novel, the character-sketch of Sampath is none else, but Narayan's charming friend Sampath himself who became a film director. Narayan expresses this fact in his memoir, *My Days* that he was specialized in the theatre and was a master of the dramatic art. Sampath loved and welcomed his friends always but could frankly tell his friends: "*There should be no printing obligations between friends*". Sampath in real life too has become a very busy film personality.³⁸

The Financial Expert (1952) by Narayan is considered his masterpiece. The novel is well-constructed into five parts like five Acts in Elizabethan drama, tells the story of the rise and fall of Margayya, the financial expert. Margayya, a money lender starts his business under a banyan tree, in front of the Central Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank in Malgudi. His profession is to help the shareholders of the bank to borrow money on a small interest, and lends it to the needy people at a

higher rate of interest. Balu, the spoiled son of Margayya created severe problem by throwing his account book into the gutter, which makes impossible for Margayya to carry on his old business. He approaches an astrologer to show his horoscope and receives the advice from astrologer that to regain his wealth, he should perform Lakshmi-Puja for forty days with ash from a red lotus and ghee made out from a gray cow in order to please the goddess of wealth. Margayya performs the suggested ceremony of Lakshmi-Puja hopes of a prosperous career. Dr. Pal, an old man sells him MS book on Bed Life to get it published. Madan Lal, a man from the North publishes that book at fifty-fifty partnership base; accordingly, the publication of the MS book brings Margayya a good fortune. But his spoiled son, Balu ruins him repeatedly by wasting a lot, cannot pass his SSLC, even tears out the school leaving certificate into four quarters and throws them into the same gutter where he has already thrown the account book of Margayya. Balu marries Brinda, the daughter of the owner of a Tea-estate in Mempi Hills. Though, Pundit raises the obstacle on the issue of unmatched horoscope, but another astrologer is paid Rs.75 to tally the horoscope. Narayan satirizes that 'money can dictate the very stars in their courses'. Margayya grows rich in the course of time, even contributes to war fund and works day and night to fill up his money bags. Meanwhile, Balu harasses his wife and engages in nocturnal activities in the company of Dr. Pal. Dr. Pal whispers to the people that Margayya's business is not going well as a result, hundreds of people demand their deposit. Consequently, all the wealth accumulated through unfair means by Margayya is lost unexpectedly. Ultimately, Margayya advises his son to restart their old business under the same banyan tree. Hence, the novel centres around the theme of lust for money along with the father-son relationship and certain religious beliefs practiced in Indian culture.

The ritual of Lakshmi-Puja is an aspect of Indian mysticism. Religion and rituals in the postcolonial writer lead to what Ken Goodwin has termed 'an objectification of a social need'.³⁹ It symbolizes one type of supplementary system to the constructed culture. Pujas and Mantras bring one, a good luck and prosperity

is a firm conviction. Narayan shows how man prospers on Indian soil by performing such sacred observance. Through the context of Lakshmi-Puja he seems to suggest that when a man is surrounded by worldly disaster, none, but God alone grants him the peace and survives his earthly existence. God is the ultimate force of survival and place of refuge. In India, a man like Margayya obstructs the government strategies or policies for national development: *"If the purpose of the Co-operative Movement was the promotion of thrift and the elimination of middlemen, these two were the objects that were defeated here under the banyan tree"*.⁴⁰ Apart from the vigour of the narrative, what is remarkable about the book is the unselfconscious ease and humour with which R. K. Narayan conveys the spirit of Indian Life.⁴¹ Hence, Narayan's depiction of Indian reality demonstrates a legacy of the ancient and contemporary verifying the traditional rhythm of Indian life. Margayya is enticed by the thought of purchasing a western automobile. Dr. Pal induces Margayya to accept the semi-pornographic Bed Life for publication which catches the attention towards the invasion of modernity into the Indian life. It is a custom in India that childless couples vow to God to perform Pujas and offer gift, jewelry or money if they are blessed with children, e.g. Margayya and his wife fulfill their vow by offering money to the Lord of Tirupati Hills. Margayya insists that his son should regularly pray Goddess Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning for better knowledge. The school-going ceremony of his son is also performed with splendor. Narayan also narrates the enmity between two Goddesses, Lakshmi and Saraswati in the novel, i.e. *'Shree and Saraswati never go together'*. The priest tells Margayya: "There is always a rivalry between the two- between the spouse of Vishnu and the spouse of Brahma. Some persons have the good fortune to be claimed by both; some, on the contrary have the misfortune to be abandoned by both. Evidently you are one of those for whom both are fighting at the moment".⁴²

Patrick Swinden in his article on *Gods, Demons and Others in the novels of R. K. Narayan* states:

*“Here for the first time, Narayan succeeds in bringing his interest in Hindu mythology into alignment with his ambition to represent a character’s inner development on the ‘orthodox’ Western psychological model”.*⁴³

The character-sketch of Margayya is shown as a multifaceted personality. His business early on is to collect money as money seems everything to him. K. R. Srinivas Iyengar in *Indian Writing in English* remarks that ‘there is a certain chain of nemesis in the intersecting relationships between Dr. Pal and Margayya, the apostles respectively of sex and money. Margayya’s ruminations and obiter dicta on money set the tone of the book and offer a clue to the extraordinary career of this Malgudi Napoleon of finance.’⁴⁴ His materialistic approach represents a colonial outlook: *“It is money which gives people all this (authority, dress, looks). Money alone is important in this world. Everything else will come to us naturally if we have money in our purse”.*⁴⁵ In one of his dialogues with the Priest, Margayya shows his strong passion for money and tries to convince the superior power of the wealth over the rest: *“A man whom the Goddess of Wealth favours need not worry much. He can buy all the knowledge he requires”*,⁴⁶ but the same Margayya teaches his son Balu to prostrate before Goddess Saraswati. Margayya has secured a small framed picture of the Goddess Saraswati, the Goddess of learning and enlightenment, sitting beside her peacock and playing on the strings of *veena*. The picture is hung up in the study room where Margayya enjoins his son ceremoniously to pray to the Goddess every morning. When his son discovers the fact that Margayya is fond of worshipping Lakshmi instead of Saraswati, Margayya very tactfully answers to avoid further misinterpretation: *“It is all the same Goddess. There is no difference between Lakshmi and Saraswati, do you understand?”*⁴⁷ Hence, his inner soul cannot escape from the inherent *Sankaras* earned since centuries where learning functions as a pious form. The hidden native consciousness prevents him from becoming mere materialistic man. The striking features of this novel remain an unselfconscious ease and humour through which Narayan has communicated the essence of Indian life.

The novel *Waiting for The Mahatma* (1955) narrates the love story of Sriram and Bharati with the political background of India during the pre-independence phase of the nation. Sriram joins the Gandhian missionary camp to seek Bharati's love. Sriram is stunned, uncertain and awkward character while Bharati is educated in Gandhian principles and her character seems ascertaining the identity of a true follower and devotee of Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi (fictional) and his 'Quit India Movement' are placed in the background of the novel. Though, the Mahatma has not been assigned the key role, but Narayan has maintained the special dignity of his character in the novel. The fund is being collected for the reception of Mahatma Gandhi. Sriram actively participates in Gandhiji's tour of poverty stricken villages. The historic movement 1942 breaks out and Gandhiji is arrested. Meanwhile Sriram carries on the propaganda of 'Quit India Movement' also meets Jagdish, a terrorist and national worker and joins in revolutionary activities, notes down the messages and speeches of Subhash Bose from Tokyo and Berlin, circulates cyclostyled copies among soldiers, engages with a group of derailing the trains, cutting telegraph wires and setting fire to the records in law courts, exploding crude bombs and other acts of violence. Sriram joins in the terrorist activities and result he is arrested, but released from jail after independence. Soon after his release, Sriram rushes to approach Bharati in Delhi Birla Bhavan and marries her after seeking consent from Gandhiji (fictional). Sriram and Bharati remain the witness to the murder scene of Mahatma performed by a misguided youth. Hence, Narayan has foreshortened the freedom struggle and the assassination of Gandhi woven together with the love story of Sriram and Bharati through this novel.

The novel focuses on colonial alienation and abandonment and an attempt to restore the indigenous culture. For example, Gandhiji (fictional) addresses the people in Hindi as a mark of respect to his mother tongue: "*I will not address you in English. It's the language of the rulers. It has enslaved us*".⁴⁸ He advises the people to practice *ahimsa* (non-violence), truth, *Ramdhun* and spinning of Charkha as a part of his mission: "*I see before me a vast army...We, the citizens of this*

country, are all soldiers of a non-violent army".⁴⁹ Bharati is a daughter of India and is "clad in a Sari of Khaddar, white home-spun".⁵⁰ Her name itself symbolizes the motherland (*Bharatmata*). Gandhiji advises Sriram to practice non-violence to protest the British Rule, but to follow an ideal concept of *Satyagrahi*, a true soldier of truth and non-violence: "Before you aspire to drive the British from this country, you must drive every vestige of violence from your system ... you must gradually forget the term 'Enemy'. You must think of him as a friend who must leave you. You must train yourself to become a hundred percent *ahimsa* soldiers".⁵¹ Here is the concept of an ideal *Vaishnavjan*, a man of truth, as defined in Indian philosophy. Silent protest without a weapon is more impressive than violent attack. Gopad, the follower of Mahatma and a terrorist also states: "Mahatma will not let me be violent even in thought".⁵² Such statement delineates the Gandhian consciousness in the colonial and the post-colonial India.

Govind Prasad Sharma in *Nationalism in Indo-Anglian Fiction* remarks that "Gandhian consciousness became a style of living and thinking with notes of spirit of India, a search for identity and Purna Swaraj which gave "a new meaning and a new significance" to the national movements and strengthened the Gandhian touches of "deep faith in love for all".⁵³ Narayan suggests through the title of the novel that waiting of Sriram comes to an end after his marriage with Bharati, but waiting for Mahatma continues for the people of Malgudi and the entire India. Hence, *Waiting for the Mahatma* is considered a tale of remarkable insight into the upsurge of Indian nationalism as witnessed through the eyes and hearts of Sriram and Bharati, and told with all the genius and compassion we have come to expect from R. K. Narayan.⁵⁴

The Guide (1958) is the most fame rewarded novel of Narayan. The novel won the Sahitya Academy Award in 1960 and was adapted to film as *Guide*, a Hindi movie directed by Vijay Anand. An English language version was also released. Narayan was unhappy with the way the film was made and its deviation from the book; he wrote a column in *Life Magazine*, "The Misguided Guide," criticizing the film.⁵⁵ The book was also adapted to a Broadway play by Harvey

Breit and Patricia Rinehart and was staged at Hudson Theatre in 1968 with Zia Mohyeddin playing the lead role and a music score by Ravi Shankar.⁵⁶ The novel concentrates on Raju, a railway guide. The railway guide, popularly known as 'Railway Raju' brings in contact with Rosie, the dancer and her husband Marco, the fanatic archaeologist. Raju falls in love with Rosie and seduces her in absence of Marco, which is resulting in the separation of Rosie and Marco. Raju transforms her into an icon courted by wealthy and influenced dignitaries wherever she performs her dance. Raju makes a fortune by manipulating her. In order to gain her valuable jewelry, dissipated Raju forges her signature, but the police investigation disturbs his whole plan and sends him to jail. After releasing from jail, Raju takes shelter in a ruined temple on the bank of the river Sarayu, it is nearby the village Mangala and it is located a few miles away from Malgudi where the innocent villagers treat him as miraculous saint. To respect their compassion, Raju too performs the new role of a saint which has been assigned to him by innocent people. In the days of famine Raju is forced to remain on a fast to please the rain-god. Velan, the ignorant villager misinterprets the message conveyed by Raju, creates the chaos and Raju remains helpless against the predicament. Though, Raju's inner spirit awakens him subsequently to sacrifice his life for the sake of the public good. On the twelfth day of his fast, Raju falls down, tired just as there are signs of rain on the distant horizons. "Velan it's raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs. He sagged down".⁵⁷ There seems ambiguity over the concluding part of the novel because it hasn't been clearly mentioned by the novelist, whether Raju actually dies or remains just fainted temporarily. The 'Time' magazine notes that *The Guide* floats as gently as a lily pad on the surface of Indian life and yet suggests the depth beneath. It manages to describe a saint who is neither born nor made, but simply happens, almost like the weather – Time.⁵⁸

The famous Mysore drought might have inspired the novelist to base his novels. Narayan writes in his memoir, *My Days*:

*A severe drought had dried up all the rivers and tanks, Krishnaraja Sagar, an enormous reservoir feeding channels that irrigated thousands of acres had also become dry, and its bed a hundred and fifty feet deep was now exposed to the sky with fissures and cracks revealing an ancient submerged temple. As a desperate measure, the Municipal Council organized a prayer for rains. A group of Brahmins stood knee deep in water (procured at great cost) on the dry bed of Kaveri, fasted, prayed and chanted hundred Mantras continuously for eleven days. On the twelfth day it rained, and brought relief to the country side.*⁵⁹

Actually Narayan has considered this incident as a starting point of writing this novel and during his travels to America; this idea crystallized in his mind. The novel was written at Berkeley in a hotel room. Raju has been altered into a spiritual guide from a tourist guide. Through Raju's character Narayan has conveyed the mythical truth of a sinner like Valio, the robber, who, after the realization of his sin transformed into Valmiki, the great sage and writer of the epic named *Ramayana*. The portrayal of Rosie describes the sublimity of the rich heritage of Indian classical dance. Though, she could not preserve the dignity of Indian womanhood. Rosie as an educated woman blends the touch of modernity along with classical talent in her identity.

Rosie's impressive performance as a professional *Bharat Natyam* dancer can be considered obviously a postcolonial phenomenon. *Bharat Natyam* is a part of the national heritage in post-independence India. Raju proves his sainthood by practicing fasting for rain to the famine-stricken region is an Indian reality. Raju unwillingly accepts the role of a saint, but his fasting serves as a means of self-purification through which Narayan focuses Gandhian Philosophy: 'Suffering for the welfare of others where the dignity of life lies'. Raju wants to search for his true identity. B. S. Yadav in an article on "*The Guide- A Psycho-Philosophic and Socio-Ethical Study*" states that 'the novel presents a conflict between the Eastern and the Western culture and synthesizes the two through their assimilation which has been symbolized by Rosie's transformation into Nalini and like Anand,

Narayan points out that one has to go to the West in order to come back to the East'.⁶⁰ Raju's mother symbolizes the traditional values while Rosie and Raju remains the representative to modernity. Through Raju's character the novelist also satirizes another aspect of hypocrisy that there are many fake Sadhus who misguide the innocent people in the name of religion, but ultimately become the victim of their misfortune. The novelist has also depicted the reality of illiterate mind, e.g. one of the villagers wants to know if the rain falls because the movement of the airplanes ruffles the clouds while the other opines if atom bombs are drying up the clouds. Such statements by rural people reflect the humorous aspect of illiterate minds. It's a true picture of post-war independent India. The features of modernity are a part of the Indian reality as delineated in the novel. For example: the arrival of the train in Malgudi and 'the palace' where film featuring Dietrich, Garbo, Laurel and Hardy are regularly screened. S. P. Swain in an article on "*The novels of R. K. Narayan and Indian Reality*" remarks that for Narayan, reality is a unity where there is no intrinsic and fundamental schism between its constituent parts.⁶¹ The novelist has shown religion and faith as linked to social and economic conditions. Natural disasters, famines or social tensions cause people to return to their faith. Hence, the novel mirrors Indian tradition, culture, and spiritual vision.

The Man Eater of Malgudi (1961) by Narayan is an allegory or fable justifying mythical truth that 'evil is self-destructive'. Though, the title of the novel has been slightly paradoxical since man eater in the novel is not a tiger, but a mighty man Vasu who kills a number of wild animals in Mempi forests. Vasu, the monster is powerful enough to kill a man with a single blow with his hammer fist. The novel is narrated by its tragi-comic hero Nataraj, the printer of Malgudi. Mr. Sastri, the compositor and proof reader is his assistant. Krishna, the poet and Mr. Sen, the journalists are his constant companions. H. Vasu: M.A., taxidermist arrives in Malgudi to stay as a tenant in a room in the upper storey of Nataraj's printing press. Vasu's terrific stature generates fear among Malgudian. They live in terror of Vasu, the monster whose business is to collect the dead animals in his

room for stuffing. Nataraj the worshipper of non-violence proves feeble against Vasu's strength. Vasu challenges to shoot the temple elephant named Kumar in a festival procession organized to celebrate the poet's completion of a portion of his religious book. Nataraj and his friends immediately report to the police authorities, but even police authorities express their inability to take action against Vasu until the crime has actually been committed. Though, the procession passes without any untoward incident. Nataraj learns that Vasu has died eventually. The murder is suspected and all are interrogated, but the medical report declares that Vasu has died of a concussion received on his right temple from a blunt instrument. Afterwards, Rangi, the temple dancer discloses the mystery of Vasu's death that while striking a mosquito settled on his forehead, Vasu slapped his temple and died instantaneously. Hence, Vasu dies of his own blow from hammer-fist.

K.R.Srinivas Iyengar suggests *"perhaps The Maneater of Malgudi was itself meant to be a modern version of one of the Deva-Asura conflicts of very ancient times"*.⁶² Iyengar has equated the character of Nataraj with Deva which seems slightly improper because Nataraj, the mortal is poor and weak in comparison to Deva while Vasu can be considered Asura according to his physical strength and gigantic figure. He seems to be very much like the Mahishasur at the feet of goddess Durga. Vasu justifies his act of killing innocent animals and stuffing them as *"a better method of preserving wildlife"*.⁶³ Vasu's utterances have the resemblance with the colonizing British, e.g. *"I think there is a good business proposition here. I can supply them stuffed eagles at about fifty rupees each. Everyone can keep a sacred guruda in the puja and I'll guarantee that it won't fly off"*.⁶⁴ His economic mind knows no mercy. Narayan satirizes the materialistic approach of western culture. In an answer to Nataraj's anxious plea, Vasu calculates his nasty mathematics: *"Has it occurred to you how much more an elephant is worth dead? You don't have to feed it in the first place. I can make ten thousand out of the parts of this elephant- the tusks, if my calculation is right, must weigh forty pounds, that's eight hundred rupees. I have... and each hair on its tail can be sold for twelve annas for rings and bangles; most women fancy them*

*and it's not for us to question their taste. My first business will be to take out the hairs and keep them apart, while the blood is still hot; trunks, legs, even the nails-it's a perfect animal in that way. Every bit of it is valuable.*⁶⁵

Narayan conveys the mythical truth that 'evil is self-destructive'. Sastri emphasis at the end of the novel: *"Every demon appears in the world with a special boon of indestructibility. Yet the universe has survived all the rakshasas that were ever born. Even demon carries within him, unknown to himself, a tiny seed of self-destruction, and goes up in thin air at the most unexpected moment. Otherwise, what is to happen to humanity?"* Nataraj states: *"the story of Bhasmasura, the unconquerable, who scorched everything he touched, and finally reduced himself to ashes by placing the tips of his fingers on his own head"*.⁶⁶ Vasu too kills himself while trying to slap away the mosquito that lands on his head. Hence, belief in myths is a part of the common people's life in Narayan's novel.

Rituals are woven parts of Indian culture. *"Each morning after taking his dip in the river Nataraj sits on the sand reciting a prayer to the Sun to illumine his mind"*. Mathu, the tea-shop owner firmly believes that there has not been a single accident on the narrow, twisting road to the mountain *"because the Goddess protects us"*.⁶⁷ Considerably, the novel seems to be an allegory to the colonial invasion of India. Vasu arrives in Malgudi to start a business, seizes the entire upper floor of the press owned by Nataraj, Nataraj allows him to stay as a tenant and shows his spirit of generosity. In addition to this, Vasu's fondness for hunting symbolizes the habits of the British rulers. The novel is considered purely an "Indian" because it applies an unambiguous reference to Hindu mythology. It takes the form of an imagining of the 'Nation' as the signifier of difference. The idea of non-violence has been framed as the cultural identity of the nation.

Narayan's next published novel, *The Vendor of Sweet* (1967) is viewed as 'inspired in part by his American visits and consists of extreme characterizations of both the Indian and American stereotypes, drawing on the many cultural

differences. However, while it displays his characteristic comedy and narrative, the book was reviewed as lacking in depth.⁶⁸ The novel narrates the story of Jagan, the sweet vendor who seems to be influenced very much by *Bhagavad Gita* and a strict follower of Gandhian philosophy. He wears *khadi* and spins *charkha*. Though he tries to pursue Gandhian way of life, but manages two account books to avoid paying income tax which contradicts his character. Mali is his spoiled and careless son who decides to give up his studies to write a novel. Mali also intends to go to America to learn short-story writing. Despite this, Jagan is proud of his son that his son resides in America, but soon his happiness converts into misery when he receives the news that his son is eating beef. Moreover, Mali returns home with an American girl called Grace. Though not married, but they have been living an immoral life. Mali also wishes to set up a factory for story-writing manufacturing machines with American collaboration. The novelist has satirized here that to what extent man becomes the slave to the machine. Even, stories can be manufactured by electronic devices is a good joke on modern mentality. At the end, Jagan retires to spend his remaining life in an ashram near the river and hand over his business to Mali. The novel depicts the father-son relationship as well as the differences of outlook between two generations. Jagan is not only a vendor of sweets, but also an agent about selling life-philosophy. He dreams of *Ramrajya*.⁶⁹ where there are no beggars and beggars he considers “*a disgrace to the nation*” He has learnt from Gandhiji the ideal of life “*simple living and high thinking*”. His spinning of *charkha* is a part of *Swadeshi* movement. He advocates Ayurvedic treatment. As a lover of natural care and natural diet he takes “*twenty drops of honey in hot water*”.⁷⁰ He advises people “*a twig from margosa tree*” and warns everybody not to take bristles which are “*made of the hair from the pig’s tail*”.⁷¹ He considers Margosa tree as ‘Amrita’ “*which kept the gods alive*”.⁷² While explaining the natural antiseptic to Grace, his daughter-in-law, Jagan cites an example of his father as a lover of Margosa twig who “*died at ninety without a single tooth loose in his jaw*”.⁷³ It seems that Narayan here favours the Ayurveda; perhaps it might have derived through his grandmother who also was prescribing certain leaves and its juice to the sick people visiting her. Narayan portrays the

most versatile and helpful nature of his Granny in his memoir *My Days*. Granny would first tell the person to remain quiet who is suffering pain terribly: “*This leaf is sanjeevini, mentioned in the Ramayana. It can save you even from the venom of the darkest cobra. Don’t make that face. Go on, swallow it*”. When a neighbor came in a panic over a child having convulsions, she would drop whatever she was doing and hurry away, assuring the visitor again and again: “*Nothing to fear. Apply cold pack on the head and hot water at the feet; there will be no trouble unless you reverse the process*”.⁷⁴ The novelist has visualized a cross-cultural encounter between Indianised Jagan and his Americanized son Mali. Jagan the strict vegetarian rebukes his son for eating of ‘beef’. He reminds Mali the sayings of Shastras: “*The Shastras defined five deadly sins and the killing of cow headed the list*”.⁷⁵ When Mali criticizes Gandhiji’s struggle against elimination of caste-system, Jagan, the lover of motherland warns him not to charge the father of the nation and disrespect cultural values: “*of Ramayana and Bhagvad Gita and all the trials and sufferings he had undergone to win independence*”.⁷⁶ Walsh considers him “*a disciple of Gandhi*”.⁷⁷ The novel also mentions the ‘Tonsure Ceremony’ a symbolic act of total surrender where people offer their hair to Lord Venkateswar. Narayan, being a traditionalist often tries to retain the values of religious heritage of Indian civilization. Hence, the novel reflects the Gandhian perception in the post-colonial India.

To conclude this chapter, the researcher would say in context to hypothesis that it is possible to trace the postcolonial discourse of creating an image of native culture through the means of rural locale, language and customs in the work of R. K. Narayan. Perhaps, may not be in its strictest sense, but his novels examined in this chapter can be read fruitfully from a native perspective. R. K. Narayan’s *The Man-eater of Malgudi* (1961) is an attempt to restore indigenous culture, philosophical discourse and cultural identity, while *The Guide* (1958) presents socio-cultural change, new cultural identity, colonial abandonment and alienation or the conflict between two cultures and socio- ethical study. His *Swami and Friends* (1935) and *Waiting for The Mahatma* (1955) also depict colonial

abandonment concentrating Indian freedom movement, and *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) throws light on cultural identity and nationhood. Similarly, *The Vendor of Sweet* (1967) and *The English Teacher* (1945) define the cultural collision and introduce the survival of national, religious ethics as well as native educational set up.

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CHAPTER 4

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS OF NATIVITY

INTRODUCTION:

R.K. Narayan is now regarded as one of the greatest of Indians writing in English. He is the most artistic of the Indian writers, his sole aim being to give aesthetic satisfaction, and not to use his art as a medium of propaganda or to serve some social purpose, and he is the rare example of a pure artist, one who writes for the sake of art, and not out of any ulterior motives. That is why his popularity has been translated into a number of languages of the world, and his reputation as an artist has been steadily rising. He is one of those lucky writers who have achieved recognition with the publication of his very first novel. He has fifteen novels, about a hundred short stories, a number of articles and sketches, to his credit, and all his large body of work, with few exceptions, is uniformly of a high standard. His first three novels deal with the three different stages in the life of the same character, though he is given different names. *Swami and Friends*, *Bachelor of Arts* and *The English Teacher* are novels of school and college life and they deeply autobiographical. *The Dark Room* which came in between the last two and *The Sweet Vendor* are also novels of domestic life. *The Financial Expert*, *Mr. Sampath*, *The Guide* and *The Man Eater of Malgudi*, deal with the careers of money-hunting men of the world. Usually, Narayan takes no note of the stirring political events of the day, but in *The Waiting for the Mahatma* he has introduced the figure of the great Mahatma, and the effect is rather melodramatic, but this too is not a political novel. It was no doubt an artistic mistake to have dragged in the great Mahatma, too big for any single work of art, but the Gandhian movement is not its theme. Its real theme is the love-story of Sri Ram and Bharati, and it has been dealt with effectively and credibly. All this work is remarkably even in the quality of its achievement. Naturally, his later work is more complex and more introspective than his earlier work, but there can be no question about the quality even of his earlier work. William Walsh once thought that *Mr. Sampath*, which deals with the Zani Indian Film industry, was an exception, but he has now revised his opinion.

He now regards Narayan as one of the most distinguished novelists writing in English in the common wealth. He admires his work for its curious blend of eastern material and western methods. He is certainly one of the most written about Indo-Anglian writer of fiction and his rating has always been high. He has been compared with Jane Austen, with Chekov and in the USA, he is considered to be the third great novelist of the world, the other two being Faulkner and Graham Greene. He is the most artistic of the Indo-Anglian novelists and India can justly be proud of this great son of hers.

All together to the above features, R.K.Narayan is an Indian writing in English, and his Indianness is reflected in various ways in the novels, which gives me to find definition for the concept of Nativism with in his novels while studying and it also helps to evolve some of the features of the Nativism.

DEFINITIONS FOR NATIVISM

Before going to discuss the very concept of nativism in R.K.Narayan's novels we will examine various definitions on Nativity.

➤ Encyclopedia- Indian Literature- Vol.1. ¹

DESHI (Kannada): The term is evidently derived from the Sanskrit word '*deshi*' which indicates a region and thereby the specific characteristics of a particular region-whether of language, literature or race. Hence the word '*deshi*' means the racy elements found in the language and literature of a region. It is of interest to know that the word, in addition to the lexical meanings of intonation and the specific characteristics of a particular region, has got itself mixed up with the word '*deshi*' which has the connotation of '*charm*' or '*beauty*'. In a way, it could be stated that the original connotation of the idiosyncrasies of a certain region has slowly been thrust into the background, and the later connotation of '*charm*' or '*beauty*' has come to stay rather predominantly.

DESHI (Sanskrit): *Deshi* and *Marga* are terms indicating trends in drama, music and dance.

DESHI (Telugu): Literature is classified into two types: one is known as *Marga*, and the other, as *Deshi*. The former shows the influence of Sanskrit literature in the conduct of the plot, language and prosody; while the latter is free from it.

➤ **Big Oxford Dictionary²**

NATIVE: One born in a place; one connected with a place by birth, whether subsequently resident there or not. **1.** Legally, a person is a native of the place or country where the parents have their domicile, which may or may not be the place of actual birth.) **2.** Applied disparagingly to local residents belonging to a place. **3.** Belonging to, or connected with, a person or thing by nature or natural constitutional, in contrast to what is acquired or superadded; esp. of qualities which are inherent or innate in the person or thing.

NATIVELY: In a native manner- Naturally, without disguise, plainly, straightforwardly.

NATIVENESS: The fact or quality of being native; naturalness.

NATIVISM: **1.** Prejudice in favour of natives against strangers; the practice or policy of protecting the interests of the native residents against those of immigrants. **2.** The doctrine of innate ideas- he holds, combined the truth that is in sensationalism with the truth that is in nativism.

NATIVIST: **1.**One who favours or advocates a policy of nativism. **2.** One who holds the doctrine of innate ideas.

NATIVITY: **1.** of one's nativity, belonging to one by birth, natural. **2.** Birth considered astrologically, a horoscope.

➤ **Dictionary from Website (Definition, Thesaurus)³**

NA.TIV.ISM (n) [nativ.ist (n), na'tiv. is'tic (adj.)]

1. A socio-political policy, especially in the United States in the 19th century, favoring the interests of established inhabitants over those of immigrants.
2. The reestablishment or perpetuation of native culture traits, especially in opposition to acculturation.
3. Philosophy- the doctrine that the mind produces ideas that are not derived from external sources.

➤ **Dictionary of the English Language⁴**

NATIVISM ['neI+I, VIZam] (n)

1. (Government, Politics and Diplomacy) Chiefly US- The policy of favouring the natives of a country over the immigrants.
2. (Social Science, Anthropology and Ethnology) Anthropol- The policy of protecting and reaffirming native tribal cultures in reaction to acculturation.
3. (Philosophy) The doctrine that the mind and its capacities are innately structured and that much knowledge is innate.
 - Nativist (n) & (adj)
 - Nativist (adj)

NA.TIV.ISM ['neI+I, VIZam] (n)

1. The policy of protecting the interests of native inhabitants against those of immigrants.
2. The policy or practice of preserving or reviving an indigenous culture.
3. The doctrine that certain knowledge, ideas, behavior or capacities exist innately.
 - Na'tiv.ist, (n) & (adj)
 - Na'tiv.is'tic, (adj)

NATIVISM:

1. The human brain is capable of spontaneous or innate ideas.
2. The custom or policy of favoring native born citizens over immigrants as in the awarding of Government jobs.

NOUN NATIVISM

1. The policy of perpetuating native cultures. (in opposition to acculturation)
2. Social policy- a policy of for dealing with social issues.
3. Nativism-(Philosophy) the philosophical theory that some ideas are innate.
4. Philosophy- the rational investigation of questions about existence and knowledge and ethics.
5. Philosophical doctrine, Philosophical theory- a doctrine accepted by adherents to a philosophy.

NATIVISM CAN BE SUMMED UP THUS: ⁵

1. *Nativism* is dedicated to the cause of freeing Indian English literary criticism from the shackles of Euro-American dominance. It supports indigenous and local traditions and fights against the imperialistic and centralized patterns.
2. The literature that dwells deeper into its roots and its own soil can be called *native* literature. It views writing as a social act and assumes of it a moral commitment to the society within which it is born.
3. *Nativism* understands a piece of art, music, sculpture, painting and its stylistic features, forms and structures bear unmistakably the characteristics of its locality and period.
4. *It* is postmodernist in its emphasis on cultural differences and it is postcolonial as it battles against the invasion of alien sensibilities. It is returning to roots with cultural authenticity and notion of belongingness.
5. On one hand *nativism* refers to certain styles, linguistics, genres and formal features of a work; on the other, it comprises the whole socio-cultural and psycho-spiritual outlook of an author or even a society.

6. *Nativism* is progressive in its concept and fights the revivalism which destructs the very basis of our native pluralism. It is a plea for cultural self-respect and freedom that emerges from the Bahujan samaj- the greater part of the common men viz. the plurality of India.
7. *Nativism* emphasizes the superiority of language in the creation of culture. It places the culture of the masses in opposition to that of elite. It debunks mythical assumptions and provides space for subalterns and marginalized souls. Language here assumes cultural significance including distinctive of the people.
8. *Nativism* consists in the features of collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories of one or more differentiating elements of common culture, an association with a specific homeland and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population.
9. A culture's or a literary activity's innate capability to transform and absorb alien influences into its natural methods can be called *nativisation*. It emphasizes its identity and specificity and resists encroachment of alien homogenizing forces.
10. *Nativism* is an amalgamation of the *marga*, *desi* and *videshi* critical idioms, working against derivative and debilitating traditions and practices. It traces its antecedents and genealogy in traditions and its remote past.
11. *Nativism* is not a search for *Swadeshi* but for *Swarajya* a search for the creation of categories of modernism in its own roots and soil. It subverts the mythical assumptions and attempts to present the actual.
12. *Nativism* is not only a movement for the authority and self-assertion of marginalized, regional and subaltern groups and people but also supporting movement of broader confederate nationalist movement against outsider's domination and bogus internationalism.

THE CONCEPT OF NATIVISM:

R. K. Narayan patently professes *Nativism* essentially highlighting regional consciousness, self identity, south Indian geography, protection of interest of

native inhabitants, revival of indigenous cultural practices and forms, discussion about social and native cultural issues. He also includes customs, tradition, culture, language, dialects besides reestablishment of native cultural traits in opposition to a culturisation.

He also further highlights paradigm to establish a close relation between literature and culture ideological studies and comparative literature, closeness and earthiness for self expression through indigenization of English language to evolve a native consciousness of a writer.

“I would like to relate a very recent experience of mine which opened altogether a new scenario before me of the post modernist India attempting to reconcile three basic sets of contradictions or oppositions : between the past and the present, between the East and the East, between tradition and modernity. My mother fell ill just a fortnight ago with a eye block and she was rushed to a hospital. It was one of the two most prestigious private hospitals of Mysore – a truly modern hospital with the latest medical gadgetry, set-up and management. But what surprised me was that in the main foyer of the hospital where all the important management units like Enquiry, Cash, Accounts, along with a waiting place for the visitors are situated, one can find a small temple of Lord Ganesha in the corner. In fact, one of the evenings when I was passing through the foyer of the main Gate I heard the sound of a hand-bell: it was a priest doing *arati* and a group of visitors praying with forded hands. The fragrance of the burning incense and the noise of the prayers in the silent zone of a hospital was quite revealing to me. It is a new metaphor of the socio – cultural existence of Indian which is constantly exploring how to develop its own modernity by absorbing its traditional values as well as new innovations.

This is possible if one understands the terms *Kula* and *Shila* in Indian situation as explained by Niharranjan Ray. *Kula* is heredity, inheritance, tradition. *Shila* is the making of a man, his demeanor and personality which, however, are conditioned by his *Kula*. *Shila* in its own given time and space goes on discarding

elements of *Kula* which have lost their potency and in the process generates new models of thought and action and thereby ensures the continuity of a culture which, in-turn, enriches and invigorates the *Shila* making modernity sharp and effective. Hence a great work of art, in the Indian context, is the expression of both the traditional and the actual.

DESIVAD is not an obsession with roots. It is a concept which has come to challenge the very idea of Eurocentric modernism and internationalism the tendency to compare every literary text /trend with some Euro-American product. Now one realizes that by borrowing things from the west one cannot bring about change and enter the realm of modernity. The elements of modernity are to be sought in our roots and traditions in our own realities. Our failure to bring about a true economic development, technological change and modernization is to be understood properly.

It will be wrong to say that in a tradition that has been as open to transformation as ours, it is wings rather than roots that signify a living culture. One who understands the *Kula* and *Shila* concept of our existence understands it well that for us both the wings and the roots are important. The Indian mind has always conceived of change within a frame work of continuity. So in the Indian context there is no difference between man's deeper awareness of cultural verities and a newer tradition absolutising the technology of manipulating matter for the sake of ephemeral utilities. Our modernism as a phenomenon or value is not an absolutely unrelated one without reference to the past or the future.

It will be equally wrong to say as mentioned in the editorial of the *TIMES OF INDIA* on January 18, 1995, that the sole item on the *nativist* menu is "an unchanging cultural self, believed to lie buried like a tuber beneath the top soil of foreign influence while the project of digging for lost tubers may keep the ideological pot boiling, it generates an extremely constricting aesthetic". *DESIVAD* does not ignore foreign influence. It only wants to develop a sense of Indianness and Indianness in a consciousness of compositeness of thought. One

implication of wishing to emulate faithfully the western model is to be condemned forever, as *Harish Trivedi* says, to trail somewhat dustily behind it, and therefore the task here is of devising an approach or perspective which would be validly Indian without being eccentric or outré. A meaningful modernity which is truly Indian, can be developed not by merging the western modernism with the Indian realities and creating a new category to go with the emergence of a new writing and critical awareness in respect of modern Indian Literature in different Indian languages. In fact, in place of any synthesis of the East and the West or India's civilizational categories and the values of Western modernism, if the East and the West are accepted as opposites to be interpenetrated to create a structure (higher entity) as referred to by *Sushobhan Sarkar*, then that could give us the right understanding of Indian modernism. The interpenetration of India's pluralistic cultural tradition with the new elements of contemporary western civilization is to be obtained for our modernity to define its place and role in a fast changing world. DESIVAD, therefore is not a search for SWADESHI but SWARAJYA, a search for the creation of categories of modernism. DESIVAD is a search for qualities or which can explain our modernity. In this paragraph I am sincerely trying to define the concept of *Nativism*. We find that though the spirit of *nativism* is amply expressed in literature, the concept per se has not been much discussed. The reason is that it was impossible to begin such a discussion in Europe and because it could not begin in Europe, it was impossible here too. Hence, in every literature in the world we find periods in every literature in the world we find period in which *nativism* was given the central place. And it is during such periods that we find the literature of that country flourishing. Example in English, the Elizabethan or the Romantic period. The *nativistic* spirit gains primary in such periods and the creativity of the writers of the period is deeply involved in the process of *nativisation*.

Linguists, Stylisticians, archaeologists, anthropologists, and art historians have shown quite conclusively that a *native* or *national style* or *any region* and period –whether in literature or in other human activities – exists and it is quite

distinct and different from that of other regions and periods. The exact period and the place of the work of art can be accurately established by means of the *native principle*. In India one can instantly recognize to what region a piece of music or a song or a musical tune or a singing style belongs. Language is even more microscopically region and period-specific, so that one can with certainty recognize the period and region of the language of any literary work. And since literature can be expressed only in the language, which in its medium, the historical, geographical and cultural references of the medium, indirectly, rule the linguistic style of a literary work. Its characteristic style unmistakably guides us to the origin of the literary work. It is not necessary here to restate the filial relationship between literature and its cultural environment. It is only on subjecting it to the test of *nativism* that it can be established why the MAHABHARATA is a work from ancient India or the ILIAD from ancient Greece. It is as simple as matching wild animals with their natural habitats.

Unfortunately, such a simple view brightens these given to incomprehensibility in literary studies. And again, our research scholars are exposed to world literature only through the English language. They can mistakenly believe that a great work becomes universal only if it finds its place in an isolated, international linguistic region as such. It is like an urban child relating giraffes, elephants, peacocks and ostriches to the city zoo or Eskimos, Bedouins, tribals etc., to his television screen. Mistaken notions of internationalism cannot be cleared unless a good understanding of the concept of *nativism* is developed.

Now, one may ask, what is the extent of regional expanse required for a literature to be *native*, how large or how small should the size of the region be in order to be adequate for the full realization of *native* sensibilities? Is it wrong in considering South India or in extending this periphery and reaching out side of India, and if some yogi thinks that the whole world is his home in what part of it would we be living? I don't think it is possible to define the boundaries of *native* sensibilities in this manner. But it does not mean that *nativism* in literature has no territorial limits.

This question of expanse can be best addressed by the intensity or a writer's sensitivity in his everyday life. The shortcoming caused by the lack of a *native* sense can never be overcome by sheer imagination, aestheticism or modernist themes. After all, being *native* in being aware of the totality of the geopiety, or the consciousness of the homogeneity of all its caste, ethnic communities, sects, religious, traditions periods and places – with their vertical and horizontal intersections.

According to *Balachandra Nemade*, we are becoming less and less sensitive to the fact that basically we are an unbroken chain of variation of one and the same culture and of languages gradually changing from Tamil Nadu to Assam or to Sind. The reasons for this diminishing awareness are the cultural pressures from foreigner's rule for many centuries – another example of similar magnitude can hardly be found elsewhere in the world-colonial slavery, our continued defecation of foreign culture even after independence, our newly bounded institutional centralization, newly formed linguistic states, and the resulting euphoria these fuelled, and the vanishing importance of the minorities in our democratic set-up. The English educated upper classes – who find themselves rootless now, but are quite dominant – to us a kind of artificial “inter-nationalism” as an ideal. Therefore, in our national life, the *native* factor is never given its due place. That is why, even in literary studies, *nativism* finds no place.

In anthropological studies *nativism* is seen as one of the major indicators of a living society. One has to treat it with due sanctity. And that is why no culture is considered superior or inferior to another. According to *Ralph Linton*, an anthropologist, *nativism* is the result of cultural contact. He has proved that whenever a culture is under threat from another more aggressive culture, the weaker one's awareness of its native values is expressed in many ways. In 19th century India, such was the condition. That is why there were many a *nativistic* movements in that period. The revolt of 1857, frequent uprisings in various places, the farmer's revolts and also the various *nativistic* movements – ranging from political ones to these of language cleansing – initiated by leaders like *Jotiba*

Phule and Janshedji Tata, were all meant to express awareness of our *native* set-up. The shining example of this is *Gandhiji's* freedom movement based on non-violence. In a sense, *nativism* of a group cannot be seen in an isolated context, because in order to be a cultural phenomenon the *nativistic* spirit should be aware of other culture existing elsewhere. *Nativistic* movements have references to external oppressing cultures, whereas *Nativeness* in to relate to its own culture.

The excess of *nativism* can lead a society to extreme self-centeredness and ultimately to its downfall. This aspect, we had mentioned earlier, during the discussion on the effects of inbreeding. Such an excess gradually gives rise to the tendency of living in isolation from the outside world, a kind of lineage superiority – complex and only self-satisfying lifestyles flourish in such a society.

I will mention some of the concepts which reveal the soul idea of *Nativism*. Self identity, Regional consciousness (*Nativeness* defining particular region or religion of south India), Cultural, social, Religious, political values or aspects or visions.

1. Narayan's name must ever be associated with *Malgudi*, 'a name now wholly fictitious but which is creative imagination has made so real that it is constantly and seriously spoken of as though it were south Indian geography'.
2. The idea of protecting the interests of native inhabitants against those of foreigners.
3. The idea or practice of preserving or reviving an indigenous culture (esp. south Indian culture).
4. The concept which is dealing with social and native cultural issues.
5. The idea of dealing self-identity with other Indian English writers.
6. The concept of showing Indian *Nativeness* than to south Indian *Nativeness* than to particular state than to particular region than to particular religion which includes customs, traditions, culture, language, dialects so on etc.

7. The reestablishment or perpetuation of *native* cultural traits especially in opposition to acculturation.
8. The bondage between him and *native* place which give rise to create an imagine world called *Malgudi*, which realizes *Nativeness* of every Indian reader.
9. *Nativism* is a term for desire to return to indigenous practices and cultural forms as they existed in pre-colonial society. So, R.K.Narayan urges them to recognize the damage of hiding behind and the need to seize and shape their own identity through *Nativism* in narratives, characters, themes, dialect and language.
10. The term *Nativity* portrays in south Indian culture which give rise to evaluate critically the cultural values and assumption such as the idea and role of characters, the role of theme, and the uses of dialect and language and narrative techniques in the R.K.Narayan's novels. It also makes an attempt to evolve cultural criteria that is native and indigenous and demonstrates a paradigm that could also establishing a close relationship between literature and culture, ideological studies, comparative literature and Indian English literature.
11. The perception of the values and assumptions of south Indian culture is characterized by closeness and earthiness by R.K.Narayan, who has spent most of his lives in south Indian and has become part and parcel of this culture. So, he writes with certain amount of authority. The novels become primarily vehicles of self-expression though it written in a foreign language.
12. In the hands of R.K.Narayan, the English language itself gets indigenized, integrated and fused into the text of the novels by the absorption of proverbs, expressions, customs and festivals from the *native* languages and culture. The absorption in R.K.Narayan is spontaneous, natural and without much effort.
13. *Nativism* is the study of concept of Indianness which in turn to south Indianness particular to regionalist which give rise to become a *Nativist*

through the strong regional, cultural, traditional, social background to approach the values, aspects and assumptions in Indian English novels which makes it manageable, concrete and existential.

14. *Nativism* means self, local, regional, social, cultural, political consciousness of a writer who shows or sketched in all his novels. So, it also took part in or participated in showing its identity or represented in national and international level, industrialization, globalization, urbanization from its real ideologies.

15. *Nativism* means our intellectual endeavor in any areas. *Nativist* positions have begun to emerge from those who are anti-imperialistic, those who believe in the value of indigenous and local cultural resources, and those who are opposed to centralizing and homogenizing authoritarian structures whether traditional or modern.

CONCLUSION:

The concept of *nativism* demands that we should refuse to receive standards other than these we have evolved ourselves. We may borrow from outside to whatever extent; it will only strengthen our *nativism*, provided that the standards followed in such cultural borrowing should be our own standards. If a particular kind of internationalism does not suites, we should reject it. Once we accept the primacy or *nativism*, our first responsibility is to refrain from meddling in matters the world over and must first of all concentrate on our own street, village, region, language and province. In post independence India, such hollow thoughts, political parties, and movements, gained importance as pay only lip serve to the ideas of national integration, national unity, one world, welfare of humanity and so on. The dominant class has been playing political tricks on the common people with false notions of unity and greatness. I think we Indians, being the members of the oldest living civilization in the world, are the most eligible to establish the native principle as an essential and fundamental requisite of human existence.

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CHAPTER: 5

THE REPRESENTATION OF NATIVITY IN R. K. NARAYAN'S NOVELS

This chapter concentrates on R. K. Narayan's fictions that reflect native land to elaborate on the representations of nativity. It analyzes the varied forms of imaginary Malgudi and shows how he is able to transform a particular limited place into a symbol of native land and its life. Though fictitious, yet Narayan's native land of experience represents South Indian culture. Hence, the historical outline of this region is also incorporated in the chapter. The study of characters, the customs, beliefs, superstitions, social evils, socio-cultural life, natural calamity, freedom movement, language, style and life philosophy, etc. included in this chapter to define the native land dimensions of native consciousness reflected in Narayan's creative world.

Before interpreting his imaginary place, the facts regarding the South India must be known, i.e. the history associated with the particular land should be located first to be familiar with the locale or backdrop represented. He represents the South India. Presently, it has been transformed into four states. South India had a huge expansion of land and had experienced the rising and falling of a number of dynasties and empires in that time. Surveying *A History of India*, ¹South India has been placed among the great empires of India. Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund mentioned that South India is separated from North India by the *Vindhya Mountains* and the *Narmada River* and large tracts of barren land. The Deccan particularly the central and western highlands and the „far south“, the *Dravida Desham* had a history of its own. While screening the geopolitics of this region, they state that the history of South India was determined by the contrast of highland and coastal lowland. At the height of the early medieval period this became very obvious when the great regional kingdoms of the southwest (*Pallavas* and *Cholas*) and the western highlands (*Chalukyas* and *Rashtrakutas*) vied with each other for the control of the large rivers flowing from west to east. The fertile land of *Krishna* and *Godavari* was particularly coveted by rival powers. South India

was known as rich land in ancient times. According to the Bible, *King Solomon* may have sent his ships once every three years carrying gold, silver, ivory, monkeys and peacocks. *Megasthenes* reported that in the late 4th century BC the wealth of the *Pandya* rulers was derived from the trade with pearls. The ancient geographers like Ptolemy in the second century AD mentions not only the ports of Southern India, but also the capitals of rulers located at some distance from the coast. *Hermann Kulke* and *Dietmar Rothermand* mention that the pattern of gradual penetration of the hinterland of the southeast coast is clearly reflected in ancient Tamil literature. In the texts of the *Sangam* period five eco-types are mentioned again and again. These five types are the mountains, forests and pastures, dry, barren land, the valleys of the great rivers and the coast. It was initially assumed that *Shatavahanas* and *Kharavela* dynasties emerged soon after the decline of the *Maurya* Empire around 185 BC, but more recent research seems to indicate that they arose only around the middle of the first century BC. The early history of the south is the history of the three tribal principalities of the *Cholas*, *Pandyas* and *Cheras* mentioned in *Ashoka's* inscriptions in Brahmi script of the 3rd century BC and in *Kharavela's* inscription of the 1st century BC. At the end of the *Sangama* era the development of the three southern kingdoms was interrupted by the invasion of the *Kalabharas*. It ended only when the *Pallava* dynasty emerged as the first major regional power of South Indian history. A similar process occurred when the *Hoysalas*, a highland tribe, emerged at the time when the *Chola* Empire declined.²

Muslim kingdoms arose in South India during the medieval era. To resist the dominance of Muslim power, the Empire of *Vijayanagar* was established in the early 14th century. In *A History of South India* by *K. A. Nilakant Sastrimentions* that starting on its career a decade earlier than the *Bahmani* kingdom that of *Vijayanagar* became the focus of resurgent. The task of *Vijayanagar* was thus to conserve Hindu society and save it from the dissolution which threatened it from several directions.³ The Southern empires found helpless against the Europeans power arrived during the 16th century CE. They were

forced to accept the Europeans dominance. The British set up the Madras Presidency covering the most of South India directly under the British Raj. Hence, during the colonial period the whole region of South India, was divided into the Madras Presidency and Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore, Cochin, Vijayagaram and a number of other minor princely states. After 1947, the linguistic formation offered South India a new structure and it was divided into four states namely: *Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu*.

Narayan's native land of experience was Chennai. His sister stayed in Coimbatore where he used to spend his vacation when he received university education in Mysore. He also served as a clerk for some years. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar shows the changing scenario of the town and opines that Malgudi can be mere Lalgudi no more, if ever it was; the old familiar taluka town has now acquired richer, more exotic, surroundings, without quite changing its essential self. Has Lalgudi merged with Yadavagiri to become Malgudi? (*Indian Writing in English*.⁴ Since Malgudi landscape or regional set up seems identical with such places. *Lalgudi*, a town in *Tiruchirapalli* district in Tamil Nadu, is located near *Coleroon* River and the river *Ayyan Vaikal* is passing through *Lalgudi*. While looking to the geographical set up of Coimbatore, it is situated on the bank of the river *Noyyal*. It is also known as *Kovai*. Coimbatore is surrounded by the Western Ghats mountain range in the western part while northern region covers the reserve forests and the *Nilgiri* Biosphere. The fictitious town *Malgudi* has a similar type of background, but to Narayan's *Malgudi* has no other substitute. In the Introduction to his *Malgudi Days*, Narayan himself declares his *Malgudi* region as an imaginary region and a concept that broaden its appeal to reveal the universal perspectives: I have named this volume *Malgudi Days* in order to give it a plausibly geographical status. I am often asked, "Where is Malgudi?" All I can say is that it is imaginary and not to be found on any map. If I explain that Malgudi is a small town in South India I shall only be expressing a half-truth, for the characteristics of Malgudi seem to me universal. Malgudi has been only a concept, but has proved good enough for my purposes.⁵ Still the University of Chicago

Press has published a literary atlas with a map of India indicating the location of Malgudi. Narayan want to prove the human characters are seeming to be similar everywhere, maybe that's why he created imaginary town Malgudi. Narayan has not drawn any map of Malgudi to assign it a fixed geographical status. For whatever it stands, but one can imagine the South Indian culture into a form of Malgudi. Narayan's first novel *Swami and Friends* indirectly specifies Malgudi located in South India. It represents an image of south Indian culture in all its walks, Hence, can be assigned a category of one of the towns belongs to South India. What is the secret of a successful writer? What are the major sources of inspiration to him? What category of narration, method or language attracts the reader? Such questions are often raised while appreciating or examining the writer critically. It seems that all depends upon the careful selection of theme, language, locale, reader's mentality, the contemporary trend or the output which can either be social, political or religious.

NARAYAN'S MALGUDI IMAGINARY NATIVE LAND:

The post-colonialism in literature appeals to the native cultural identity or concentrates on the rationality. The concept of Nativism is also emerged consciously in mid 19 centuries. Colonial impact made us to review our native culture, customs and etc. The success of a novel often depends upon vigilant selection of a particular locale, which is rendered to locate the ideas of a writer to develop his fictional world. The novelist often seems narrowing or limiting particular region through which he visualizes the regional specialties of the selected land. Malgudi, the fictional, semi-urban town is the chosen land or imagined region by R. K. Narayan. The novelist has brought to light the features of common people of this land. Such region can either be a mental or geographical, but it has been conjured and settled in such a way as to represent any other place. The setting for most of his novels is the fictional town: Malgudi, which is conceptualized like the real place. The invention of various regions by writers has assigned them the status of local writers. For example, Thomas Hardy's Wessex, Faulkner's Yoknapatawaha, Garia's Macondo and

Phanishvar Nath Renu's *Purnia* region have established the path of representing nativity in literature. R.K. Narayan too, well-known for his *Malgudi*, is very much considered the regional artist among the Indian Writers in English. P.P. Mehta in *Indo-Anglian Fiction* states, "*The regional novel finds its full expression in R. K. Narayan*".⁶ The regional novel generally describes the physical features of the region, locality, its people and their life, customs, traditions, etc. Through which the general image of particular land is reflected. Likewise, Hardy's novels are "novels of character and environment" also seems true in case of Narayan. Malgudi is the backdrop of his fictions and through the eyes of this land Narayan's characters are developed, assessed and pass through the trials of life. This region offers the author a sort of familiar confinement to base his fiction. Malgudi entered in Narayan's creativity like pre-settled site: I remember waking up with the name Malgudi on Vijayadashami, the day on which the Goddess of learning is celebrated. Malgudi was an earthshaking discovery for me, because I had no mind for facts and things like that, which would be necessary in writing about Malgudi or any real place. I first pictured not my town but just the railway station, which was a small platform with a banyan tree, a station master and two trains a day, one coming and one going. On Vijayadashami I sat down and wrote the first sentence about my town: "the train had just arrived at the Malgudi station".⁷ The setting is vital to the story and it also becomes a character in itself. Mukharjee observes Malgudi's reality more recognizable in the following words: It is Narayan's triumph as an artist that makes us have complete faith in the reality of Malgudi. It is so strongly implanted in our imagination that we wonder whom we are going to meet in this town.... The streets and lanes appear to be as familiar as one's home town.⁸

Narayan, while indicating the sources of his fictitious Malgudi, mentions its historical birth during an age of Lord Rama wherein *Lord Buddha* and *Sage Shankaracharya* visited in a later period while conducting their travelling (*paribrahaman*). Malgudi evolved with the changing political landscape of India. A good comparison to Malgudi, a place that Graham Greene characterized as

“more familiar than Battersea or Euston Road”, is Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha County (*The Hindu*) Graham Greene states: Whom next shall I meet in Malgudi? That is the thought that comes to me when I close a novel of Mr. Narayan’s. I do not wait for another novel. I wait to go out of my door into those loved and shabby streets and see with excitement and a certainty of pleasure a stranger approaching, past the bank, the cinema, the haircutting saloon, a stranger who will greet me I know with some unexpected and revealing phrase that will open a door on to yet another human existence.⁹ The narrator is a shrewd observer of the society from where he receives the design to frame his fiction. He serves as a guide to them and draws a picture of imaginary world in such a way that it looks like the real one. Narayan brought small-town of India to his audience in a manner that was both believable and experimental. Malgudi was not just a fictional town in India, but one teeming with characters, each with their own idiosyncrasies and attitudes, making the situation as familiar to the reader as if it were own backyard.¹⁰

Chelva Kanaganayakam in his essay on “Revisiting Malgudi and Little India” remarks that Mulk Raj Anand in ‘Coolie’ and “Untouchable” exposes social and political ills in the country. But Malgudi does provide the basis for a syncretic world that reveals the social and cultural pluralism of the nation. It is an imaginary construct, but not an improbable one. Narayan appropriates both spatial and temporal freedom by sidestepping the dictates of geography and history. The spatial freedom—namely the decision to create a world that is recognizably Indian without specific local markers – enables the symbolic and synecdoche function of Malgudi... Malgudi he presents masquerades as the real India, with a clearly identifiable social and religious unity (*Mapping the Sacred Religion*).¹¹ As some of his characters like Raju, Natraj, Krishnan retains the balance between tradition and modernity in their life struggle to be adjusted with the current social set-up. He replies when asked in an interview “Where does he like to live in India?”: I like Madras because I was born there and because in Madras the ancient and Modern coexist. Some Madrasis are very orthodox. There are parts of the city where people with a traditional background in Sanskrit are still living.¹²

Narayan is frequently referred as a desi novelist because of depiction of single locale in most of his novels. His analysis of the idiosyncrasies of small town life has bestowed him good fame as novelist of social order. Walsh in *R. K. Narayan: A Critical Appreciation* describes Narayan's Malgudi a metaphor of India.¹³ Nirmal Mukherji too, in his *The world of Malgudi* has appended a map of Malgudi in his doctoral thesis, yet all the efforts to identify Malgudi have remained unsuccessful, for it is a pure country of the mind which does not actually exist on the map of India. Narayan's concern seems more social than the topography of the region. Regional backdrop seems to shift towards the universal sphere in the course of time. The greater emphasis is laid upon assessing the customs, traditions and human relationships. He might have thought that imaginary place would prove more beneficial than the real one as it offers more creative freedom according to the necessities of his fictional frame. Malgudi is like Hardy's "Wessex" region and a dream country in which physical features of various places are rearranged, modified and magnified. Whatever happens in Malgudi happens everywhere. Truly speaking, one cannot claim that Malgudi is the reflection of entire personality or image of a nation, but of course it represents the mainstream of the major aspects of native life in such a way that it remains the microcosm of the country. Even such vision can be extended to its wider sense or the world at large. Narayan has transformed his restricted province Malgudi into a symbol of India and its routine life. The portrayal of this land has its general as well as specific appeal. William Walsh very appropriately remarks that Narayan's Malgudi novels are regional, but not parochial.¹⁴ Nativity is already woven facet in Narayan's novel, but mere limiting it to Malgudi province would be inaccurate because his characters are seen crossing those regional boundaries and have trans-regional appeal. To that extent, his vision has universal appeal. The Washington Post notes: "R. K. Narayan's Malgudi is a metaphor, not of India, but of the world".¹⁵ Michel Pousse in *R.K. Narayan: A Painter of Modern India* observes that "Malgudi is India and India is the world...This universal appeal comes from the author's humanism".¹⁶

It seems that Narayan himself is the creation of Malgudi because he has preferred to locate himself within this milieu in the form of confinement. Though, the state of such confinement is very dear to him and he loves to live in it. Malgudi is like a treasure house to him from where he could extract the latent magnificence of Indian culture and civilization. When the task of film-making based on his novel *The Guide* was initiated, the selection of Malgudi location was a big puzzle to filmmakers. Narayan narrates his experience in *My Days*, that in the beginning they (the filmmakers) went to great trouble to seek his advice, and he had spent a whole day taking them round Mysore to show the riverside, forest, village, and crowds, granite steps and the crumbling walls of an ancient shrine which combined to make up the *Malgudi* of his story; they went away promising to return with crew and equipment, but never came back. He learnt subsequently that they had shifted the venue of *The Guide* to Jaipur and had already shot several scenes on a location as distant from *Malgudi* as perhaps Iceland. To add this, when he protested, they declared, “Where is Malgudi, anyway? There is no such place; it is abolished from this moment. For wide screen purposes, and that in colour, Jaipur offers an ideal background; we can’t waste our resources”.¹⁷ Narayan was very unhappy at that time because by exterminating the Malgudi, the filmmakers had discarded his milieu and human characteristics. Narayan completely disapproved the glamorous world and making a local star into a national figure. Even his attempt to draw Malgudi location was discouraged once by his uncle who showed his hatred for unknown place like Malgudi: “And what’s this *Malgudi*? Where is it? Why do you write about some vague place not found anywhere, while there are millions of real places you can write about? Don’t write about unreal places. You must read “Dickens” novels... There you have a model, write like him”.¹⁸ To Narayan the depiction of unknown place was a challenge to that extent, but Narayan could judge well his imaginary place to represent it like the real one. Alexander McCall Smith in an “introduction” to Narayan’s *My Days* observes the truth mirrored in the Malgudi milieu: “Malgudi provides the strong sense of place... This is India distilled – an urban India, but one in which a hinterland of jungle, of small villages, of wide plains is still present”.¹⁹

Narayan walks with the changing scenario of modern nations in his later novels. K.S. Ramamurti notes in *Alien Voice*: “He lets us watch from novel to novel the growth of Malgudi...Its emergence from the peace and self assurance of the thirties to the more eventful and sensational years of the Gandhian and post independence period”.²⁰ Iyengar in *Indian Writing in English* also observes Malgudi humanity through which one finds its association with any place: “Malgudi is Narayan’s “Casterbridge”, but the inhabitants of Malgudi – although they may have their local trappings – are essentially human, and hence, have their kinship with all humanity. In this sense, “Malgudi” is everywhere”.²¹ The river *Sarayu* in Malgudi is considered as pride. It is some ten minutes walking from *Ellaman* Street, the last street of the town, chiefly occupied by oil mongers, its sandbanks are the evening resort of all the people of the town. The *peepul* branches overhanging the river rustle pleasantly. A light breeze plays about the boughs and scattered stray leaves on the gliding stream below. Birds fill the air with their cries. Far away, near Nallappa’s Mango Grove, a little downstream, a herd of cattle is crossing the river. And then a country cart drawn by bullocks pass, the cart-man humming a low tune. It is some fifteen minutes past sunset and there is a soft red in the west.²² Each region, whether small or big, is labeled the cultural and sacred history of its own in India. People often recite the wonder and significance of particular places on several occasions. Raja Rao’s remark in the Foreword to his *Kanthapura* seems more interesting in this context: There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich *sthalapurana*, or legendary history of its own. Some god-like hero has passed by the village – Rama might have rested under this pipal tree, Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath, on this yellow stone, or the Mahatma himself, on one of his pilgrimages through the country, might have slept in this hut, the low one, by the village gate. In this way the past mingles with the present and the gods mingle with men to make the repertory of your grand-mother always bright.²³ The birth of the river *Sarayu* is also associated with the myth of Lord Rama. The novelist has drawn a mythical truth of Indian cultural heritage in his novel *Mr. Sampath: The Printer of Malgudi*: Rama was on his way to Lanka (Ceylon) to battle with evil there, in the shape of

Ravana who abducted Sita... He rested on a sandy stretch in a grove, and looked about for a little water for making a paste for his forehead- marking. There was no water. He pulled an arrow from his quiver and scratched a line on the sand, and water instantly appeared. Thus was born Sarayu.²⁴

Narayan through mythical tales seems to convey the message of non-violence. This is the land where two extremes are shown integrated. Here, Darwin's theory of 'survival of the fittest' or 'might is right' proves mistaken. Love for all, and refuge to weaker is the Vedantic wisdom. The great *Shankaracharya* appeared during the next millennium saw on the riverbank a cobra spreading its hood and shielding a spawning frog from the rigor of the midday sun. He remarked: "Here is the extremes meet. The cobra, which is the natural enemy of the frog, gives it succor. This is where I must build my temple." He installed the goddess there and preached his gospel of *Vedanta*: the identity and oneness of God and His creatures. And then the Christian missionary came with his Bible. Dynasties rose and fell. Palaces and mansions appeared and disappeared. The entire country went down under the fire and sword of the invader, and was washed clean when *Sarayu* overflowed its bounds. But it always had its rebirth and growth.²⁵ One of the tourists on his visit to Malgudi says that there was a small shrine on the peak right in the basin. "It must be the source of Sarayu mentioned in the mythological stories of the Goddess *Parvathi* jumping into the fire; the carving on one of the pillars of the shrine actually shows the goddess plunging into the fire and water arising from the spot". Ishvar Temple was in the North Extension- there were hundreds of minute carvings all along the wall.²⁶ The Ishwara Temple of the tenth century has the carvings of the entire epic *Ramayana* along the wall. There was a little temple at the end of the *Vinayak Mudali* Street under a cracked dome. It was an inner shrine containing an image of Hanuman, the God of Power, and the son of wind. According to tradition, this God had pressed one foot on the very spot where the shrine stood, sprang across space and ocean and landed in Lanka (Ceylon), there to destroy *Ravana*, a king with ten heads and twenty hands, who was oppressing mankind and abducted *Rama's* wife

Seetha.²⁷ The river Sarayu represents the nice portrayal of native culture. It remains the symbols of perpetuity.

The novelist describes the living picture of various streets and lanes of Malgudi: *Kabir Street and Kabir Lane, Anderson Lane, Sarayu Street, Kulam Street, Vinayaka Mudali Street, Abu Lane, Ellaman Street*. The region has been beautified through its Mempi Forest, Nallappa's Mango Grove, the Forest Road and the Trunk Road to Trichinipoly. Lawley Extension is named after the mighty engineer Sir Frederick Lawley, who was at one time the Superintending Engineer for Malgudi Circle, which consisted of Government officials. The Trunk Road to Trichinopoly passed a few yards in front of these houses.²⁸ Lawley Extension is the most fashionable residential areas of Malgudi town where the elite class, the government officials, doctors and engineers live. The Market Road is "the life line of Malgudi".²⁹ This is the place where Margayya, the protagonist of *The Financial Expert* uses to reside and has been referred "crowded, noisy and dirty" locality. Srinivas while writing his editorial on the housing policy for Malgudi notes that plenty of labour from other districts had been brought in because the municipality had launched a feverish scheme of road development and tank building, and three or four cotton mills had suddenly sprung into existence. Overnight, as it were, Malgudi passed from a semi-agricultural town to a semi-industrial town, with a sudden influx of population of all sorts... The place was beginning to look more and more like a gipsy camp.³⁰ Mr. Sampath, while giving a history of the *Sarayu* Bridge and all its politics is of the view that the idea of putting up a bridge over the *Sarayu* was as old as humanity. *Sarayu* was one of the loveliest rivers in India ... an ornament as well as a means of irrigating tens of thousand acres. The wind of change spreads its wings initially in Malgudi when Mr. Sampath tells Srinivas that Mr. Somu, the District Board President is opening a bridge five miles from here across the *Sarayu* ... it is going to transform our entire Malgudi district.... This is going to be the busiest district in South India.³¹ There are many printing presses in the town: the Crown Electric, the City Power, Acharya Printing, Shape Printing Works, and so on and so forth.³²

Malgudi shows the gradual development of the people and their economy. The construction of their houses is viewed very ordinary in the formal stage, which later on catches a modern look. For example, Raju while narrating his past says: "Ours was a small house opposite the Malgudi station. He (his father) chose this spot because it was outside the town and he could have it cheap. He had dug the earth, kneaded the mud with water from the well, and built the walls, and roofed them with coconut thatch".³³ But when circumstances favour, Raju buys a spacious building, establishing the status of a wealthy man: "The stylish house at New Extension was more in keeping with our status. It was two storied, with a large compound, lawns, garden, and garage".³⁴ In a later part of the novel the luxurious outward show of Malgudi life is shown when Rosie and Raju use to dine on the terrace of the Taj from where Sarayu is clearly visible. Raju utters the importance of Malgudi proudly thus: "Malgudi; I said had many things to offer, historically and scenically from the point of view of modern development".³⁵ There is the description of various villages which provide setting for many episodes. *Tayur*, *Mangal*, *Kumbum*, *Sukkur* and *Koppal* are the villages which figure prominently in the novels of Narayan. *Sakkur* village is consisted about a hundred houses and six streets. Around the village there are immense stretches of paddy fields.³⁶ *Mangal* equally symbolizes the typical of rural India where one finds the thatched huts and muddy lanes, and women having water-pots on their head, no schooling system for children and poverty peeping out of their doors. *Talapur* is a to some extent larger town than *Mempi* and is regarded as an important junction near *Malgudi*. Though, the existing scenario of Indian villages is far better than the past one. The majority of the facilities are now available in rural areas too, and the villages move uniformly with the town life. During summer *Malgudi* is described as one of the most detested towns in the South India, where the heat goes above a hundred and ten in the shade sometimes... Even donkeys and dogs, the most vagrants of animals, prefer to move to the edge of the streets, where catwalks and minor projections from buildings cast a sparse strip of shade, when the fierce sun tilts towards the west.³⁷ The colonial governance too contributed to enrich the Malgudi region by implementing certain welfare

schemes. While passing the New Extension Raju, the Guide points out, without even turning his head, "Sir Frederick Lawley...The man left behind by Robert Clive to administer the district. He built all the tanks and dams and developed this district. Good man'' Hence, the statue".³⁸

From *Swami and Friends* to *A Tiger for Malgudi*, Narayan reveals new vistas of life. The small town Malgudi seems to change in the course of time. Narayan through Malgudi brings the realistic experience and enlarges such experiences to global limit. Malgudi has been trying to achieve multifarious progress in all walks of life to awaken modernity. Narayan has woven together the eastern and western cultural trends in his novels. He has interwoven the two sorts of history for his native land: human and superhuman or divine, the natural and the supernatural. The mythical truths stand side by side the existing state. The native and the alien flavors are intermingled into one region. The locale is requisite to locate the theme and draw residents, as a character without plot cannot be developed, similarly region or locale serves an essential tool to develop the novel incorporating region. The exceptional spirit is generated by the writer to symbolize the places and its people. *Amitav Ghosh's* valedictory tribute to Narayan truly reflects the spirit of Malgudi life: "His Malgudi has already become a part of the mythic landscape of India... a place where no event is without meaning, and no pain is without remedy".³⁹ Narayan's friend and the editor of *Frontline*, N. Ram opines that Narayan's art receives the universal appeal visualized through the symbolic life of South Indian people: Narayan had a special ability to make the rhythms, intricacies, and humanism of South Indian life accessible to people all over India, and indeed to the people of other cultures round the world. Central to this achievement was Malgudi, the fictional South Indian town, which he peopled with ordinary men and women, made memorable with his art.⁴⁰

The rendering of characters like *Swami*, *Krishna*, *Chandran*, *Raju*, *Natraj*, *Jagan*, *Ramani*, *Savitri* or *Susila* and numerous secondary characters epitomize the real replica and identity of Indian life. These multiple ranges of characters are easily recognizable. Narayan, through skilled art, has used the myth to focus reality

which remains straightforwardly comprehensive. The preaching from *Bhagavad-Gita*, the mythology of Hindu civilization and religious or cultural practices and beliefs offer vitality to the fictional art of the novelist. According to Narayan's *God, Demons and Others*: Even the legends and myth, as contained in the *Puranas*... are mere illustrations of the moral and spiritual truths enunciated in the *Vedas*... each form a part and parcel of a total life and is indispensable for the attainment of a four-square understanding of existence... The characters in the epics are prototypes and moulds in which humanity is cast, and remain valid for all time.⁴¹ Narayan has conveyed the philosophy by shaping the rich inheritance of Indian ethnicity and the traditionally woven perception. His' studying of deep insight into human culture and its relationship defines the ideals of Indian civilization. The sources of his creativity remain the Holy Scriptures like: the *Vedas*, the *Puranas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavad-Gita* through which he has scrutinized the true concept of Indian distinctiveness. Paul Brains judges "Narayan's fiction to be read as postcolonial reading. He opines that Narayan's exclusive emphasis on the private lives of his characters to the total exclusion of the public (even the British) is a, willful neglect of colonialism or even an act of liberation from it".⁴²

In his first novel, Narayan portrays the pen-picture of Swami who represents the child psychology as well as the background of the schooling system in various regions. The child hardly prefers to approach school because unknown fear haunts him frequently. Narayan also focuses on the wretched condition of the parents who prevent their children from going to school especially in Indian villages. Owing to poverty, the parents engage them in agriculture, cattle-grazing or labour work to earn bread. When Raju investigates the matters, he seems upset. He tries to explicate the poor villagers that "Boys must read first...".⁴³ The character sketch of Chandran in *The Bachelor of Arts* depicts the educated youth facing the problem of unemployment, their dreams, aspiration and disharmony with familial tie and ultimate sense of compromising the circumstances. His aimless wandering as a *Sanyasi* and the ultimate return to Malgudi as a submission

to fate seem the symbolic force of Indian traditional values. *The Dark Room* illustrates the oppression of woman by a male dominated culture. Patriarchy in a form of *Ramani*, suffocates dependent *Savitri*. The house becomes a dark room for her, but she suffers the blows calmly. Though, tries to commit suicide, but rescued and ultimately returns to save her family: "What despicable creations of God are we that we can't exist without a support".⁴⁴ *Savitri* represents the true self of Indian womanhood. *Ramani*, her husband calls her a dutiful wife! And adds that she would rather starve than precede her husband and she is really like some of the women in our ancient books".⁴⁵ She cannot be Nora of Ibsen's *Doll's House*. She is forced to compromise the circumstances as she remains the victim of male-hegemonic past tradition. *Shanta Bai*, the coquettish woman proves rather stronger than *Savitri*. She has left her husband because she cannot be a mere silent sufferer against his ill-treatment. She is an educated woman yet feels insecurity in her existence. She denies the sense that the liberation of woman is only possible through education: "It is all non-sense to say that women's salvation lies in the education. It doesn't improve their lot a bit; it leaves them as badly unemployed as the men."⁴⁶ *Ramani* proves his heartlessness symbolizing the patriarchal roots. He is shown a mean and debauch character representing the corrupt class, who prefer free sex life. The name *Savitri* itself suggests her mythical identity whose sacrifice can perform a miracle by bringing her dead husband alive even from the gate of (*Yamllok*) death. The English Teacher, Krishna shows to some extent different personality, who even after receiving English education could neither adjust nor fully receives the contentment in his personal life. Though, the shock of his wife's early death makes him upset completely. His ultimate consolation is searched in teaching the small children. It seems that Swami, *Chandran* and Krishna are in one single form or personality having resemblance at three different stages of life: Swami shows childhood, *Chandran* stands for youth or immaturity while *Krishna* comes in the form of maturity. The character of Swami is brought to its perfection in the form of *Krishna* showing the three different stages of life in an Indian setting, i.e. *Balyavastha* (childhood), *Kishoravastha* (of minor stage) and *Yuvavastha* (youth).

In the second phase of writing, Narayan portrays the sketches of *Sampath*, *Margayya* and *Raju*. They become the mouth speech of the novelist. Mr. *Sampath* is a complicated personality who possesses qualities like *kindness*, *sincerity*, *ingenuity* and *honesty*. He welcomes *Srinivas* warmly in his press to sustain the sense of hospitality and justifies the domestic cultural values: “When a customer enters our premises, he is in our view, a guest of the Truth Printing works. Well, you think The Banner is yours. It isn’t. I view it as my own”.⁴⁷ He performs his work as worship and treats his guest as god: *Atithidevo Bhavah*. *Srinivas* remains unworldly in his approach, even impressed by *Shanti* and gets ready to marry her. The young artist Ravi too, infatuated with the beauty of *Shanti* has gone mad later on. *Margayya* is considered the invention of war and post-war years, which is evident by scarcity of all kinds of goods. His personality introduces aspiration, ingenuity, and cunningness. He represents an image of materialistic that makes money through unlawful means. His thirst for money even brings disaster in the form of his son and disturbs his family attachment. Graham Greene describes the character sketch of *Margayya* as the most engaging of *Narayan*’s characters. *Narayan*’s third invention in this category is the character of *Raju*, who also represents thirst for money. The desire to earn more money inspires him to commit forgery and leads him towards fall. *Narayan* has conveyed the truth through these three characters that too much greed fetches destruction. “Too much greed is the source of sin” is traditionally uttered reality. *Narayan* has defined the influence of money and beauty and symbolized to what extent such things substantiate adversity. *Jagan*, the sweet vendor emphasizes the *Gandhian* philosophy demonstrating an Indian ideology on the contrary; his spoiled son Mali symbolizes the western culture discarding the age-old values. The clash between the two cultures ultimately generates the disorder. Similarly, *Natraj* of *The Man-eater of Malgudi* favours the non-violence, observing the religious norms cited in the Holy Scriptures, while H. Vasu: the taxidermist is the product of money-oriented world. He represents the mythical character *Bhasmasur*, who had destroyed himself. *Narayan* favours the sayings from *Bhagavad-Gita*: *Yatodharmahstatojayh* (where there is a religion, there is a triumph). *Natraj* tries to harmonize the tradition with

modernity as he prints books, saves innocent creatures like an elephant as well as organizes temple festivals to celebrate the marriage of *Radha* and *Krishna* and preserves nuclear family. The female characters like *Rosie* (*Nalini*), *Shantabai* and *Shanti* remain the symbols of beauty towards which the male class is simply tempted and excited to be owned. Though, *Rosie*'s attitude shows her love for classical dance and hers is not an abandoned status like *Shantabai* or *Shanti*. She shows her protest when she feels that her familial ties would smother her art. Simply looking, circumstances or evil predicament escorts them to link so-called uncivilized culture.

All the characters portrayed by Narayan are viewed under three categories: simple, complex and bizarre characters. The characters like *Swami*, *Chandran*, *Krishna*, *Srinivas* and *Natraj* can be judged under the first category. They are shown kind, straightforward and thoughtful, but lack self-confidence. Though, they seem determined, but could not act upon the desired chore. The second category covers the characters like *Ramani*, *Margayya*, *Raju*, Mr. *Sampath* and H. *Vasu*. Their outlook towards life seems intricate, i.e. they remain impetuous, unpredictable or mystifying in their ways. Their ultimate goal is moneymaking by hook or crook. They are shrewd and seem determined to achieve their desired end anyhow. Though, their individual characteristics make them different than each other. The characters of *Marco*, *Kailash* and *Verraswami* can be treated under the third category called grotesque or *bizarre* characters. These characters leave their impression as fascinating eccentrics. Similarly, female characters of Narayan's novels fall under two sets: the ideal housewives and unconventional women. *Savitri*, *Krishna*'s mother, *Raju*'s mother and the mother of *Chandran* should be considered ideal housewives as they possess qualities like modesty, gentility and obedience. Their effort is to manage religious, traditional and domestic values of Indian culture and ultimate concern is the welfare of the family. The women like *Rosie*, *Shanti*, *Shanta Bai* and *Rangi* can be placed into second group, i.e. unconventional one. They neither care for tradition nor chastity in their way of

life. Theirs is the professional approach. Though, each of these characters varies in nature and viewpoint then the rest.

Some of the subsidiary characters like the forest officer, the doctor, the veterinary officer and the police inspector represent slightly comic, local image of *Malgudi* life. He wishes to bring out in book form and distribute such rich heritage among school children, free of cost and this is how he wants to serve the country. He is shown as the sentinel of the prosperous tradition of ancient culture. Through the character sketch of the veterinary surgeon and the police inspector (circle), Narayan shows his wit and mocking approach. "Narayan's characters are fully alive in their doubts, their affections and aspirations-concern shown with assumed carelessness, Hindu customs observed as often as they are ignored, shown with gentle and wry humour. The reader enters a subtle and rewarding world bright with the colour of difference".⁴⁸

Whatever happens in India happens in Malgudi. Malgudi is no exception. The customs or beliefs in social framework are natural threads woven since the earlier period in Indian cultural history. Man is considered the product or part and parcel of society, where society judges his actions, attitudes or manners. The traditions woven into a social framework inspire and influence its people in general. R.K. Narayan too, seems traditionalist who exercises to apply a diversity of beliefs observed in Indian culture. The appeal may either be universal or local, but through such narratives we come to know the cultural range of a particular region or nation. The sense of perception is set behind such beliefs. In course of time they vary. They do not have fixity of structure. What seems useful today can prove un-methodical or useless tomorrow is equally true. Jagan, the sweet vendor does not eat beef because the cow is worshipped and treated a sacred animal in Hindu culture: "The Shashtra defined the five deadly sins and the killing of a cow headed the list".⁴⁹ It is prohibited in sermons. Slaughtering of cow is considered a sin since Vedic culture. Swami condemns Jesus for being non-vegetarian. He is of the opinion that an ideal Brahmin should purely be a vegetarian. Sriram of *Waiting for the Mahatma* remarks: "I have not even eaten cakes because they contain

eggs”.⁵⁰ A Brahmin’s whole body jerks with disgust at the very thought of non-vegetarian diet. Sriram, as a pious soul never eats meat or eggs nor drink alcohol. Chandran in *The Bachelor of Arts* shows his true Brahminic identity. When he is offered alcohol by Kailas, he rejects the proposal soon: “I made a vow never to touch alcohol in my life, before my mother”.⁵¹ These words even impress Kailas very much and soon he realizes the importance of mother in one’s life: “As long as my mother lived she said every minute “Do this. Don’t do that. ” And I remained a good son to her. The moment she died I changed. It is a rare commodity, sir. Mother is a rare commodity”.⁵² Sriram’s Granny does not prefer to sit in a canvas chair because she believes that canvas is made of leather, perhaps of the cow-hide.⁵³ Natraj observes the norms of non-violence in a strict sense. He is frustrated with Vasu’s slaughtering of innocent animals in *The Men-Eater of Malgudi*. He claims: “I had been brought up in a house where we were taught never to kill”.⁵⁴ Natraj remains the protector as well as promoter of value system ingrained in Indian philosophical thought. Garuda is thought of “the sacred animal and messenger of God Vishnu”.⁵⁵ People pay the due reverence while watching it encircling in the sky. In Indian scriptures each deity has his/her vehicle assigned (as a means of transportation), i.e. Garuda with Vishnu, the mouse is with *Ganesh* and Goddess *Amba* keeps a tiger as her vehicle. The caring and worshipping of the natural world among Indian has been practiced since the Vedic period.

People use to spend their old-age in visiting holy places. It is generally believed that if one visits such places with owing reverence; he is sure to receive emancipation from the sins committed during the whole life. Taking a bath in the holy river *Ganga* clears out their course of the journey to heaven after death. Banaras (*Kashi*) is called such a sacred place where people use to spend their spared life and prefer to die in its lap. *Sriram*’s Granny passes the concluding days of her life at Banaras: “She is in Banaras with a number of others, old persons who are waiting to die. They cheerfully await their death, and look forward to the final fire and the final ablution in the sacred Ganges”.⁵⁶

It is a well-known custom in India that barren couples vow to God to perform *Pujas* or offer their valuables, if they are blessed with children. For example, *Margayya* prays for a son and takes a vow to offer his weight in silver rupees to the lord of *Tirupati*. He fulfills his promise by visiting the lord after the birth of *Balu*. *Jagan*, the sweet vendor goes to *Badri* hills with his family where his wife seeks the blessing of *Santhana* Krishna. *Jagan* believes that this faith has blessed him a son *Balu* within a year of his pilgrimage. The religious customs like „tonsure ceremony“ is also mentioned in Narayan“s novel *The Vendor of Sweets*. *Jagan*’s cousin says that he has gone to *Tirupati* for a tonsure ceremony with the judge’s family. This act shows the complete surrender of man to God. In this ceremony one offers his/her hair to Lord *Venkateshvar*.

Narayan has also focused on the religious belief by viewing that once the body (whether dead or alive) is sent to the cremation ground for burial ceremony, it cannot be brought back to the house or society. It is called “inauspicious because such task can wipe out the whole town by fire or plague”.⁵⁷ For example, *Sriram*’s Granny actually not dead, brought to the burial ceremony, is revived and the doctor declares that she must be taken back home, but the priest warns them not to cross the boundaries of so-called superstitious religious beliefs. Narayan often depicts the reciting of the prayer which leads men towards truth, knowledge and illumination. *Natraj* offers prayers to the Sun-God and recites *Shlokas* to illumine and enlighten the self. “He rises in the morning and sets out to the river for ablution”.⁵⁸ *Natraj* also conducts deep prayer to save *Kumar*, the temple elephant. His faith has been responded and justified after the death of mighty monster *Vasu*. *Vasu* symbolizes the nature of *Asura* who resists the spiritual harmony and disturbs the routine life of innocent people. Though, materialistic vision also keeps many in touch with the offerings and rituals. *Margayya* seeks some advice from astrologer to regain his wealth. The suggested remedy, *Laxmi-Puja* for forty days with ash from a red lotus and ghee made out from a gray cow in order to please the goddess of wealth, is performed by *Margayya*. *Swami*, the school boy believes that through prayers pebbles will be converted into coins, seems silly. People often

recite prayer when placed in a critical position. The faith that God is the only saviour and offering and praying always bring favourable outcome, is criticized by Narayan in a humorous way. Swami when feels completely lost in an unknown land, he promises to offer two coconuts every Saturday to the elephant faced *Ganapati*, takes a vow to roll bare-bodied in dust, beg and take the alms to the Lord of *Tirupati*, if God make possible his return to Malgudi anyhow. *Rajam*, the son of superintendent tries to convince the friends that the fostering of enmity leads one towards hell and visualizes them the horrifying state of hell: “it was written in the *Vedas* that a person who fostered enmity should be locked up in a small room, after his death. He would be made to stand, stark naked, on a pedestal of red-hot iron. There were beehives all around with bees as big as lemons. If the sinner stepped down from the pedestal, he would have to put his foot on immense scorpions and centipedes that crawled about the room in hundreds...”.⁵⁹ It seems that Narayan has focused on *Garudpurana*: the *Shashtra*, recited after the death in Hindu religion. The ritual of praying and fasting has also left its influence in Narayan’s creativity. Whenever the natural disaster like scarcity of rain is experienced, fasting is observed to please Rain-God (*Varuna*). It is supposed that by offering such ceremony, the rain comes. *Raju*, the *Sanyasi* is forced to observe fourteen days fast to bring rain. Though, Narayan has not clearly mentioned whether it rains or not, but *Raju* experiences its arrival: “*Velan*, it’s raining in the hills, I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs. He sagged down”.⁶⁰ Ignorance or illiteracy frames certain blind belief. For example, if rain doesn’t fall, the ignorant rural people interpret the situation in a slightly humourous way. They simply ask Swami: “Is it true Swami that the movement of aero planes disturbs the cloud and so the rains don’t fall? Is it true, Swami that the atom bombs are responsible for the drying up of the clouds? Science, mythology, weather reports, good and evil, and all kinds of possibilities were connected with rain.”⁶¹

The female community generally found worshipping the *peepal* tree because *peepal* tree is considered sacred tree where God Vishnu dwells. Certain

stones are placed under *peepal* tree as religious marks. Among Hindu Deities Hanuman is generally offered oil and vermilion.

Narayan's characters express their belief in fate. They are not found heroic in their manner, but prove their worth as ordinary human beings. Horoscope has been emphasized as Indian belief. In most of Narayan's novels astrology plays its major role. The matching of horoscope for selecting the deserving bride or bridegroom is revealed in novels. In Narayan's fictional world, People accept their dominance and have deep faith in their yogic power. Marriage is considered the sacred ceremony in Hindu culture. The ritual of *Saptapadi* (where bride and bridegroom take an oath "made for each-other, never to depart" for the entire life in witness of Fire-God and parents) remains the indispensable part and without performing such ceremony, they cannot live together. It is treated as sin if it happens. *Chandran*, the product of modern age too, compares and contrasts the life in two cultures (the eastern and the western). He shows his contempt by viewing the rigidity of Indian people and favouring the liberty of white people: "The white fellows are born to enjoy life. Our people really don't know how to live. If a person is seen with a girl by his side, a hundred eyes stare at him and a hundred tongues comment, whereas no European ever goes out without taking a girl with him".⁶²

Narayan through Swami's character conveys the truth of uncertainty of fate, i.e. fate cannot be guessed. Narayan's Malgudians remain wholly helpless human being in the hands of cruel fate. Though 'character is destiny' is viewed in Shakespearean tragedies is equally true, but here Narayan's aim is to present the life-philosophy in Indian culture. The great epic *Ramayana* too, focuses on perception of vagueness of human life: 'Even Lord Ram did not know what would happen tomorrow'. The beliefs in ghosts, evil spirits or devils are deeply ingrained in Indian mentality since centuries. Illiteracy is the major cause in generating such elements. Though, educated mass has narrowed down its influence on society in the modern era. Such beliefs are treated as mere superstitions. Alchemy, the invention of the earlier period has also left its influence on Swami's character who

thinks that the coachman with some special metal, pot and herbs is able to convert copper coin into silver. Mari in *The Dark Room* while returning from his nocturnal visit with a few withered betel leaves sees an apparition. He assumes that it might be *Mohini*, the Temptress Devil. He experiences: “Ah, the Devil can walk on Water.”⁶³ It is generally thought that ghost can take any shape and perform the most difficult task in a moment. Narayan has woven the philosophy of reincarnation or rebirth that the human Soul returns after every third generation in the form of a grandson or a grand daughter or in the shape of the nearest and dearest one. Narayan has woven the concept of auspicious omens in his novels. To initiate any task the tradition-bound people insist the fixed time or moments. Particular signs or symbol stands for good omen. In Hindu society certain burial ceremony like offering the drops of water of Ganga in dead’s mouth and putting a small piece of gold or silver coin in it is also conducted.

The issues like national education system, the awakening of native cultural, social and religious identity, wearing of *Khadi* and boycotting English goods, practicing of non- violence, removal of untouchability, upliftment of marginalized group, especially women community and rural regions, and maintaining of communal harmony projected by Gandhiji had inspired the literary fields of the period to its greater extent. Being inspired by Gandhian ideals, Narayan has exposed the evils of hatred for untouchables in some of his novels. Narayan’s generation was different; say the orthodox mentality was deeply rooted in the social system. Narayan has described the wretched condition of untouchables in *The Waiting for Mahatma*. As a part of his mission called the “upliftment of backward caste” the fictional Gandhi in *The Waiting for the Mahatma* invites the untouchable boy of Malgudi. He shows his warmth and favour by offering him a seat on his divan and an orange to eat in the presence of the elite class.⁶⁴ Repetitively, Narayan indirectly mentions the worst condition of untouchable in *The Financial Expert* where they are assigned the task like the burial of the orphan or unknown body and digging: They collected enough money at the end of the day

to give a gorgeous funeral to the body. Narayan also focuses the generosity of depressed classes in a novel *The Dark Room*.

Narayan has exposed the evils of the dowry system. *Devdasi* is treated as a mean community in India even though *Devdasi* represents the classical *Bharatnatyam* tradition which has been considered one of the indigenous factors to define nation's prestige. Though, Jagan doesn't seem pleased when his son Mali brings Grace to his house without performing marriage ceremony.

Narayan has very brilliantly described various categories of the rituals observed among Indian societies with a view to reflecting Indianness. These rituals survey the ceremonies conducted on marriage, inauguration and cremation time. The celebration of fairs and festivals is an indispensable part of Narayan's fictional world. As stated in Sanskrit 'Utsav priya khalu manava' (people are fond of celebrating festivals) shows its living appeal in Narayan's novels. He artistically weaves together the commemoration of *Janmashtami*, *Diwali*, *Shivaratri* as well as spiritual fairs like *Kumbhamela*. Even the organization of fairs is also viewed by the novelist. Raju's fasting in the river to bring rain arouses the curiosity of the people in the drought-stricken area. The place soon turns into a pilgrimage, where a huge crowd gathers to see the miracle to be performed by Sanyasi. The sacrifice of the holy sage proves the beneficiary to the rest. The scene has been satirized in such a mocking aspect to reveal opportunist mind and the mass psychology: "shops sprang up overnight, as if by magic, on bamboo poles roofed with thatch, displaying coloured soda bottles and bunches of bananas and coconut- toffees. The tea-stall is set up, and its posters, green tea plantations along the slopes of Blue Mountains, are pasted all around the temple wall. The *khakhi*-clad health inspector sprays every inch of space with DDT and, with needle in hand, coaxed people to inoculate themselves against cholera, malaria, and what not. People sit around the blank space on the rear wall of the temple to enjoy the film show. Far off, outside the periphery, a man has opened a gambling booth with a dart-board on a pole, and he has also erected a crude merry-go-round, which whines all the day. Peddlers of

various kinds are also threading in and out, selling balloons, reed whistles and sweets.⁶⁵

Malgudi also experiences the “Quit India” and “Co-operative” movement. Malgudi people seem actively involved in non-cooperative movement. Gandhiji arrival in Malgudi is greatly welcomed and it becomes the talk of the town. People show their reverence for “Bapu” and readily join the movement to protest British rule. Native conscious is awakened, people boycott the foreign goods and the concept of *Swadeshi* has its high regard. Malgudians too, like the rest of the Indians, assert nationalism and free nation state. Narayan uses to portray the joint family life in the majority of his novels. The bondage of familial ties makes them harmonious to manage human relationship. Domestic norms guide them all to protect the age-old beliefs and tradition. Though, Narayan’s prime focus is on South Indian Hindu society which to some extent seems appealing domestic Indian life in its broad-spectrum. Prof. William Walsh explains: Narayan’s fastidious art, blending exact realism, poetic myth, sadness, perception and gaiety, is without precedent in literature in English... It is kind but unsentimental, mocking but uncynical, profoundly Indian but distinctively individual. It fascinates by reason of the authenticity and attractiveness of its Indian setting.⁶⁶

Narayan’s creativity explores the comic sense and primarily his art justifies the aim of art for art’s sake. But in a much broader sense, such observation seems slightly confusing when one reads his novels with different perspectives. It is equally true that Narayan writes with a purpose. The family relationship is his major concern. It seems that he offers due respect to family ties since the domestic relationship is pivotal in most of his novels. Narayan observes that the bondage of family prevents one from committing the evil deeds and if one attempts to violate those norms, the disorder will be the natural outcome. To reinstate the order and place normalcy one seeks the rescue from family. He depicts various types of relationships between father and son, husband and wife, brother and brother, grandmother and grandson. Among all the father-son relationship is of vital importance. The paternal love and generation gap are at the center in the novels.

Narayan's emphasis upon the role of the family shows his favour for Indianness. To him Indian myth is a reality through which he is inspired to draw the themes like renunciation, incarnation, re-birth, the philosophy of *Karma* and non-violence. Narayan has succeeded in bringing the ground reality to the level of common understanding and made his reader realized certain morals.

The majority of Narayan's characters represent the Brahmin community. His prime focus is on Tamil and South Indian Hindu society. The morals, the perception and the conventions of Indian civilization are typified in most of his novels. Whereas Ebenezer and Marco represent the Christian community. Though, the caste-identity of characters like Rosie and Rangi are unknown, but they stand for lower communities who are viewed as public women.

Narayan presents elegant prose style in simple language. He has applied the language of the common man in usual life in his novels. He often uses the Indian English idioms and some known proverbs. Narayan's language casual, convincing, objective, modest but "closest to the language of the newspaper and the Sunday Weekly".⁶⁷ His character's converse in simple language, having fluency and lucidity of Indian English. They employ regional words without changing in pronunciation. The change in accent is unnoticed. William Walsh sums up Narayan's use of the English language in the following words: "Narayan uses a pure and limpid English, easy and natural in its run and tone, but always an evolved and conscious medium... Narayan's language is beautifully adapted to communicate a different sensibility".⁶⁸ Narayan's favor for Indianness consists of certain words, some of which have already been accepted in the vocabulary of the English language, e.g. *Saree, Deepavali, Pyol, Dhoti, Puja, Ahimsa, Jutka, Idli, Pulav, Khadi, Jibba, Puranas*, etc.

Most of Narayan's characters prefer to wear Indian traditional dress. The male class prefers dhoti or loincloth as usual whereas female are dressed in cotton or silk sari. The dhoti is a long piece of white cotton cloth wrapped around the waist and then drawn between the legs and tucked into the waist.

Narayan is considered a pure artist who pursues the art for art's sake principle, yet the overall impression of his creativity indirectly confirms that he writes with a purpose. His prime concern is not to preach any philosophical principle directly, yet Narayan remains successful in manifesting certain life values through his comic vision. He has premeditated over the human conduct in practical life. The issues related to human relationship either of father-son or of husband-wife, are at the centre of his interest. His humour is intermingled with pathos and satire which defines life as it is with all its follies and foibles. The eastern and western cultural scenario is found mixed in his fictional world of Malgudi, but the ultimate solution sought by the novelist is the return to natural life. Human virtues and vices are exposed in his writing. His novels render the dissonance and irrationality spread in society. His attempt seems to generate the awareness towards certain hidden dissolute standards. Through his writings Narayan has endeavored to discover the genuine fissure between preaching and practicing norms. The double standards in practicing the Brahminic values, Gandhian philosophy, etc. are satirized with a view to screening the naked face of so-called cultured people. The preaching from *Bhagavad-Gita*, Holy Scriptures, etc. is symbolically interpreted through his imaginative plots.

While assigning a local name and the surroundings, the novelist transforms his aesthetic realization into authentic and convincing picture of a particular locale. The experiences earned from day-to-day life, the novelist unites them within the frame of his setting to develop the plot. The novelist's concern with the place serves as an asset to his creative power. Though, the depiction of landscape viewing its artistic touch plays its important part in defining the aesthetic sense of the writer, but while offering a regional touch the novelist deals with the entire environment covering various factors like customs, religion, social and cultural life, politics, economic status and educational environment, occupations, etc. of his chosen land. The chosen region can be a small town, city or a small village, i.e. a larger or smaller unit, but it represents realistic portrayal of the life lived in it. The novelist while depicting the regionality of particular land uses to locate his own

vision to bestow it a gorgeous touch. Hence, it seems the combination of both the real one and dream country to a certain extent. Hardy remarks in a Preface to *Far from the Madding Crowd*: The series of novels I projected being mainly of the kind called local, they seemed to require a territorial definition of some sort to lend unity to their scene. Finding that the area of a single county did not afford a canvas large enough for the purpose, and that there were objections to an invented name, I disinterred the old one. The region designated was known but vaguely; and I was often asked even by educated people where it lay.... since then the appellation which I had thought to reserve to the horizons and landscapes of a partly real, partly dream country, has become more and more popular as a practical provincial definition into a utilitarian region which people can go to, taken a house in and write to the papers from.⁶⁹

As stated earlier in the thesis, Narayan's Malgudi represents south India. One cannot fix the identity of this location; even Narayan himself has clearly stated that "his is the imaginative land". He has portrayed the general traits of his experienced south region where one finds its similarity with Lalgudi or Yadavagiri. Some of the places located in Malgudi seem partially real one, whereas some remain a dream country. Narayan shows Malgudi in a dynamic status. The old scenario remains, and new ones are added gradually. Somewhere old places receive their new names. Malgudi defines both the ancient and modern values. The birth of this place has its roots in mythic tales and it offers the history associated with Lord Rama, the great Shankaracharya and Lord Buddha while ongoing, changing set up shows its dealing with modernity. As shown in his novels, the northern part demonstrates the historical association of Malgudi where the river Sarayu flows incessantly. The eastern part offers the administrative wing of Malgudi where the Taluk office is situated. The southern part remains one of the busiest centers of the town where the railway station adds the tourist charm while the localities like Lawley Extension and New Extension confirms the modernity of the town. The Nallappa Grove near Sarayu River labels the beauty of the location. The beauty of such natural places attracts the people to visit its living

form. Though, the ugly sight of an open gutter near the Market road gives a proof to managerial deficiency over carelessness in matters of hygiene. The evils of black-marketing and bribery also reflect the impact of war and materialistic attitude of people. Though, certain native traditions still continue to exist in Malgudi, but the rapid expansion of industrialization has damaged their routine social and economic life. The people belong to older generation express their regrets over the rising mechanic culture and perishing cultural and religious values. They remain helpless against the wretched predicament of a new era. The outsiders like Vasu: the taxidermist, Dr. Pal and colonial teaching community generate the obstacles to damage the peace of domestic life of Malgudi people, but their native cultural values and religious faith still offer them power to face any danger. Men like Jagan and Natraj endeavor to restore the original culture mingled with Gandhian philosophy. The generation gap develops day by day, but anyhow the social harmony of Malgudi retains its impression in general. The setup of Malgudi seems a combination of age-old conventions and modernization wherein worshipping of deities and faith in astrology still dominates. Certain changes are noticeable as a symbol of modernity, but the return to native life is the ultimate compromise to Malgudi people. Malgudi translates the Indian reality or say it's a symbolic version of India; hence, whatever happens in India happens in Malgudi too. Malgudi walks with the nation. It cannot be free from certain evils like female exploitation, untouchability or oppression, which are woven together in its traditional structure. Deepika Srivastava and Kaushal Sharma seem to disagree over Narayan's Malgudi novels as regional novels while judging certain norms of regional novel according to Walter Allen's affirmation: "the very nature of the novelist's characters is conditioned, receives its bias and expression, from the fact that they live in a countryside differentiated by a traditional way of life from other country sides".⁷⁰ But to say that mere "regional identity" must be quite separate than other region or must have an independent identity than the rests is the excessive norm to some extent. The strict adherence to certain individual norms would be an unjust in a literary sense. Except certain individual characteristics, the differences between geography, language, dress-code, diet, customs and traditions

are very natural, but human mentality, nature or human feelings have same-like tone or approach. Each and every region doesn't have its queer or diverse traditionalistic identity. The people belong to any region are after all earthly human beings. They neither represent a heavenly form, nor alien world. To higher or lower proportion, all earthly people represent human forms; hence, the discovery of traditional differences per each and every region is inequitable to this sense. If man follows certain fix tradition every time, there remains little scope for further movement. The impact of new tradition will naturally leave its influence over the people, even if their strict adherence to established tradition. The curiosity of the human mind will definitely tempt him towards a new direction.

Narayan through microcosmic explorations of individual feelings demonstrates his concern for the nation. Each of his novels while defining the native way of life shows his greater concern for national identity. Narayan's chief anxiety is over the fate of nation. In that sense, his personal experiences seem to represent the allegorical of public and national destiny. Malgudi seems far more than the physical site since it incorporates numerous ways of considering India say social, spiritual and mythological which come together to construct its distinctive landscape. Narayan's image of India is chiefly defined as an upper caste Hindu centered particularly Tamil Brahmin perspective. To contemporary readers and critics, Narayan's image of India as a mere Hindu nation seems no longer acceptable as a national metanarrative, as it fails to some extent to tackle the multiplicity of discourses that has constituted India. To that extent, researcher of this thesis would say that mere Narayan's India cannot define the entire personality of this land, but it can be treated as traditional India, which to some extent represents a symbolic form of India and its cultural scenario. If it doesn't represent the ideal image of a nation than it reflects at least the contemporary status of Narayan's era which shows its broader expression in existing socio-cultural set up of India. Hence, to render the concrete portrait through imaginative aspect is rather an awkward exercise. What literary artist can bring into its live

appeal remains his or her world of experience that eventually manifests symbolic version of national culture.

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CHAPTER: 6

NATIVITY IN THEMES

INTRODUCTION:

The term Indian English emphasizes two significant ideas: Indian English Literature constitutes one of many streams of Indian literature and it is an inevitable product of the naturalization of the English Language to express the Indian Sensibility. The Indian novel in English to express the Indian sensibility. The Indian novel in English does have nearly a century long tradition of writing. It is an outcome of English education introduced in India in the second half of the nineteenth century. The novel as a distinct form of literature was already evolved in nineteenth century. English writers such as Dickens, Hardy and Jane Austen contributed considerably to the form and content of the novel. This highly evolved form was, no doubt available to Indian writers. They took to adaptations and intelligent borrowings. They made a small beginning in novel writing.

Later writers from the South, of the century wanted to be authentic, authentically Indian in orientation. They wanted to establish an identity for Indian writing in English. Some of the novelists such as Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan turned to the native tradition. In India, there has been a long tradition of story telling in fables and 'Puranas'. They absorbed this element into the frame work of fiction other aspects of the novel such as character study. Psychological analysis, promotion of social or ethical concerns were borrowed from the west although the telling of the story or the narrative is primarily Indian.

If one reads Narayan's novel, it may be tempted to dismiss it as a satirical sketch. Most of the meaning comes from understatement and ironic contrast. Irony in technique and realism in theme go together and in this process, the character loses much of his grotesque potential and emerges at the end with an enriched awareness of the situation in life. This is what we notice in his novels. Likewise, the situations we come across in his Novels could only be Indian. They are Indian in the sense, the themes and the episodes we notice, for instance in *Emma* or *The*

Old Man and the Sea are either typically English or American. However, it is uncritical to limit their appeal, to limit the distinct flavor of Indian writing. For, the heroes of the novels, inspite of their names and nationality are fundamentally human beings and what they experience and achieve in the Indian context has a wider significance.

6.1 THE FACETS OF NATIVITY IN THEMES:

6.1.1 THE THEMATIC APPROACH: (PAN – INDIAN APPROACH)¹

The Thematic approach to Indian English fiction aims at identifying Pan-Indian themes in the Indian English novelists. According to Meenakshi Mukharjee – “The Indo – Anglian novelist has sometimes attempted to solve the problem of heterogeneous audience by choosing themes and situations that have more or less the same validity all over the country”.² In her book, *The Twice – Born Fiction*, she has attempted to point out some common themes in the Indian English novelists. She suggests that the pan – Indian themes that form the basic underlying pattern in many of the Indian English novels are the following : the theme of social change, i.e., the disintegration of the old hierarchical and agrarian society and the break – down of the large joint family ; the national movement for political independence and the advent of Gandhi ; the encounter between the East and west not only at the level of people but also at the level of ideas³ ; the place of faith in the socio – cultural life of India, adherence to rituals and simple faith in the superior wisdom of a Guru shaping the action and conduct of many in all parts of the country⁴ ; the conscious use of myths and the Indian epics which form an integral part of the nation’s culture, to enhance the effect of the contemporary situation.⁵

The thematic approach to the Indian English fiction asserts and affirms the traditionally multi cultural make-up of the Indian ethos and the basic pattern familiar equally to all Indians. The discussion of the themes is highly generalized. By suggesting these generalized themes, the critics try to relate the novelists and their fiction works to India. The themes are not common to all the authors.

Besides, these recognizable Pan-Indian themes are not many in number and hence the novelists seem to be repetition.⁶

This approach to the Indian English novel is not able to articulate and depict the great deal of regional variation, special and distinctive to each region of India in social structure, values, customs and problems.

6.1.2 THE INDIAN “AESTHETIC” APPROACH:

The word “Aesthetic” comes from the Great word ‘Aisthetikos’, perceptive by feeling. The most appropriate meaning for our discussion here from the literary point of view is “the theory of fine arts and of people’s responses to them; The science or that branch of Philosophy which deals with the beautiful; the doctrines of taste”.⁷ The second meaning is the most applicable here. The novelists and critics, who try to explain their own understating of the ‘novel’ forming the Indian literary context, are trying to formulate a theory of art and the doctrines of taste with regard to the Indian English fiction. They attempt to articulate this approach in the following three ways:

- a) To ascertain the “*Indianness*”⁸, “Indian sensibility”⁹ in the Indian English Novels.
- b) To develop an Indian criteria of evaluation of the Indian English novels using the theories of Indian poetics like the *Rasa* and the *Dhvani* as the frame of reference.
- c) Developing an Indian conception of the “*novel*” form itself.

6.1.2.1 Discovering the “Indianness”:

To ascertain the “Indianness” means to study the Indian English novels from “The sum total of all that is reflected in the mode of life of the Indian people and their needs, aims and aspirations”.¹⁰ The critics who have attempted to study the novels from this perspective are C.D. Narasimhaiah, Paul Verghese and William Walsh and their definitions are denoted simultaneously.

- “To discover as well as to create their own identity” – C.D. Narasimhaiah.¹¹
- “The sum total of cultural patterns of India and the deep seated ideas and ideals political, economical secular and spiritual that constitute the mind of India’ – Paul Verghese.¹²
- “A special combination of thought, feeling, value and assumption, that particular taste and sentiment, that characteristic mode of action which reveal the nuance and crystallize the tone and temper of literature” – William Walsh.¹³

The above definition of the concepts of Indianness in a typical example of the serious problem involved in defining accurately the concept: a word cannot be defined by the same word. Hence the obvious problem that we encounter in making “Indianness”, the criterion to judge the works of Indian English novelists in that the concept of Indianness itself in vogue, nebulous and not easily definable.

6.1.2.2 The conception of the Indian Novel in English:

R.K. Narayan has not spelt out clearly his conception of the Indian novel in English. One could glean from his interviews and essays; the idea he has of the Indian novel in English. He considers: *“Literature is not a branch of study to be placed in a separate compartment for the edification only of scholars but a comprehensive and artistic medium of expression to benefit the literate and illiterate alike”*.¹⁴

The two requisites needed for an Indian novel in English according to R.K. Narayan are his direct and immediate contact with the subject or persons he is writing about and an immersion into the myths and legends of India. R.K. Narayan insists on the story telling aspect of the novel resembling the myths and legends of India. “The novelist is certainly not a social reformer. He is a story – teller, a raconteur, repeating the work of the gods in idly making and dissolving endless spheres for mere amusement of the process itself for diversion, entertainment, play

(Lila)".¹⁵ Narayan believes that India is rich in material for the novelist if only he has the perceptive eye to observe it.¹⁶

The second important requisite for an Indian novelist in English according to R.K. Narayan is his immersion into the rich religious traditions of India especially its myths and legends. "To be a good writer anywhere, you must have roots both in religion and in family. I have these things".¹⁷

6.1.3 THE "FORMALISTIC" APPROACH:

The word 'Form' is used in different meanings. The meaning that is most suitable for our discussion here is: "The style of expressing the thoughts and ideas in literary or musical composition, including the arrangement and order of the different parts of the whole. Also method of arranging the ideas in logical reasoning; good or just order of ideas and logical sequence".¹⁸ 'Form' from content: "arrangement, especially orderly arrangement; way that something is put together; pattern, style, distinguished from content".¹⁹

The word 'Form' is used in the sense of arrangement especially orderly arrangement, shape and structure of the novel by the critics who use the 'Formalistic' approach to the Indian English fiction.

6.1.4 THE SOCIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL APPROACH:

The Sociological and Cultural approach considers the Indian English novels as documents and sources of Cultural knowledge about India. "Indo-Anglian fiction is a major source for a systematic study of cultural contact and cultural change with the Indian world –viewed as a focus of the westerners, to increase their knowledge of acculturation processes"²⁰ Dorothy M. Spenser.

In this approach, the function of literature as a mirror of society is taken for granted. None of these critics pay any attention to style, the narrator's point of view and the literary tradition. It is significant to note that only the western critics have used the Indian English novels as sources of cultural knowledge.

6.2 THE THEMATIC STRUCTURE IN NOVELS OF R. K. NARAYAN

A study of Narayan's novels reveals that he is concerned with a number of themes and ideas. Some of the more prominent themes which could be analyzed are enumerated as:

6.2.1 HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS:

Human relationships here imply family relationship and friendship. This concept is spread over in all the novels of R.K. Narayan. In fact family in a nucleus or primitive unit which reveals sensitivity of Narayan. He presents his theme of human relationships with subtlety and profundity. He does not deal with these problems superficially. He portrays the relations of son or daughter with his or her parents sensitively in *The Bachelor of Arts*. Most of his topics are concerned with husband and wife; in *The English Teacher* he stresses the relations of daughter and father. *The Financial Expert* portrays relations of father and son. In *Waiting for Mahatma*, he presents the relations of his grand-mother and grand-son. Thus, human relationships are deeply studied in his novels. His novels are very enchanting when we come to know human relationships between adults and children. There are not water-tight compartments between the two words of Narayan. Hence we can say Human relationships in the major factor which constitutes the basis of his novels.

For examples:

In Mr. Sampath, Srinivas contemplates this theme with wonder and incomprehension:

*"What great human forces meet and come to grips with each other between every sunrise and sunset:" Srinivas was filled with wonder at the multitudinousness and vastness of the whole picture of life that this presented... nothing else in creation can assume such proportion and diversity.*²¹

Human relationships make up an intricate ‘maze’ in which the unwary are likely to lose their way. The editorials that Srinivas composes in his mind but does not print, deal with this problem. In his own life too, Srinivas, even while entangled in the maze, observes it disinterestedly, ‘like a lotus in a pond’:

It was, on the whole, an intricate mechanism of human relations. In this maze, Srinivas walked about unscathed, because he had trained himself to view it as a mere spectator. ²²

Besides exploring human relations in the mass, Narayan has also observed relations between individuals. In fact, Narayan is more interested in men than in Man. Many of Narayan’s heroes are simple men who want to get along with their fellow in cordial relationship. Even Margayya expresses this sentiment to Dr. Pal:

You see, I am not a person who cares much for advantages; what seems to me the most important things in life is good relationship among all human beings. ²³

Of these human-relationships, the father-son relationship is of crucial importance. As Uma Parameswaran points out, “Paternal love is one of the more significant refrains in Narayan’s fiction. There is no character in Narayan so vile that he is not moved by love for children, at least his own.”²⁴

Most of his major characters are devoted fathers. Even Ramani, bullying head of the house in *The Dark Room* is genuinely concerned about his children. Chandran’s father in *The Bachelor of Arts* belongs to an earlier and more undemonstrative generation; he says nothing very effusive when Chandran returns just as he said nothing when Chandran ran away, but he ages in those eight months. “One of the best points about *The Bachelor of Arts* is this relationship, the wordlessly intimated bond between parents and son-the sorrowing father not tending the garden, the fond mother keeping Chandran’s room spotlessly clean”.²⁵

In *The English Teacher*, Krishnan’s love for his daughter, Leela, is fully in keeping with his romantic temperament. In Margayya, *The Financial Expert*, and

Jagan, *The Sweet-Vendor*, we see paternal love carried to the point of imprudence. Both have only two overwhelming interests in life and for both one of the interests is their only son.

6.2.2. ACHIVEMENT OF SPIRITUAL THROUGH THE SOURCE OF THE COMIC:

Narayan's heroes are constantly struggling to achieve maturity, and each one of his novels is a depiction of this struggle. William Walsh calls Narayan's novels, "comedies of sadness". "The sadness comes from the painful experience of dismantling the routine self, which, the context being Indian, seems less a private possession than something distilled by powerful and ancient conventions, and secondly the reconstitution or more frequently, the having reconstituted for one, another personality. The comedy arises from the sometimes bumbling, sometimes desperate, sometimes absurd, explorations of different experience in the search for a new and it may be an exquisitely inappropriate role. The complex theme of Narayan's serious comedies, then is, one must not burke at the word in an Indian context, the rebirth of self and the process of its pregnancy or education".²⁶

Narayan's themes are concerned with the aspirations of spiritual maturity which is to be achieved through comic resources. Narayan's novels portray the hero's effort towards achievement of maturity. He narrates that maturity is achieved by the minutely satisfied circumstances. But his efforts are not ordinary for achieving this spiritual maturity. He gets spiritual maturity by means of meticulous accuracy and minute observation. There is no vagueness for achieving these spirituals of life. He is light-hearted and frivolous person but gets spiritual maturity after his marriage.

For examples,

In *The English Teacher* the event is the illness and death of Krishna's life. There are series of meetings. These meetings are very disconcerting, bewildering, horrifying, terrifying. In *The Financial Expert* Margayya is the most brilliant

single comic character. He realizes his desire for a life freed from illusion in a series of encounters. The same mild of hopelessness is to be seen in Srinivas in Mr. Sampath, a man so bogged down in indecision that the question of a career seemed to him as embarrassing as a physiological detail. Agriculture, apprenticeship in a bank, teaching law, he gave everything a trial once, but with every passing month he felt the excruciating pain of losing time. The passage of time-the ruthlessness with which it flowed on –depressed him. It is present in the lighter, less forward character of Chandran in *The Bachelor of Arts*.

Even in *The Guide*, Narayan's most complex novel "where the lines of development and of narrative are folded in subtler convolutions, one comes across this feeling of being lost in a pointless, endless routine, although here it is expressed in the nervier, more sophisticated manner proper to this advanced character."

*'But I was becoming nervous and sensitive and full of anxieties in various ways. Suppose, suppose-suppose? What? I myself could not specify. I was becoming fear-ridden. I couldn't even sort out my worries properly. I was in a jumble'.*²⁷

The following lines towards the end of *Waiting for the Mahatma* convey the feeling, although usually it is quieter and more implicit than this.

*"For the first time these many months and years he had a free and happy mind, a mind without friction and sorrow of any kind. No hankering for a future or regret for a past. This was the first time in his life that he was completely at peace with himself, satisfied profoundly with existence itself. The very fact that one was breathing, feeling and seeing seemed sufficient matter for satisfaction now".*²⁸

Narayan's heroes ultimately accept life as it is, and this is a measure of their spiritual maturity. This acceptance includes, "delight in the expressive variety of life, cognizance of its absurdities, mockery at its pretensions and

acknowledgement of its difficulties”.²⁹ This acceptance is something which is gradually worked towards, grown up to, and matured, and as Narasimaiah points out this maturity is achieved within the accepted religious and social frame – work.

6.2.3 DISTURBANCE OF ORDER AND RESTORATION OF NORMALCY:

In every one of Narayan’s novels, the usual order of life, the normally, is disturbed by the arrival of some outsider into the sheltered world of Malgudi or by some flight of uprooting, but in the end there is always a return, a renewal, and a restoration of normally. The normal order is disturbed only temporarily, and by the end we see the usual order established once again, and life going on as usual for all practical purposes. This theme is well stated in *Mr. Sampath*. We are told that Srinivas, “perceived a balance of power in human relationships. He marveled at the invisible forces of the universe which maintained this subtle balance in all matters: it was so perfect that it seemed to be unnecessary for anybody to do anything. For a moment it seemed to him a futile and presumptuous occupation to analyze, criticize and attempt to set things right anywhere. Of only one could get a comprehensive view of all humanity, one would get a correct view of the world: things neither particularly wrong nor right. But just balancing themselves. Just as many policemen to bring them to their senses, if possible, and just as many wrong doers again to keep the police employed, and so on and on in an infinite concentric circle”.³⁰

Thus Narayan perceives an elaborate system of checks and balances operating in the universe, but in the end it is not the Absurd or the Eccentric that is enthroned, but is the moral order which is restored and established. This theme can be easily studied through a brief consideration of the various novels.

Even in the very first novel *Swami and Friends*, the normal life of Swami and his friends-the peace, harmony and friendship- is momentarily disturbed by Swami’s failure to turn up in time to play in the crucial cricket match. The result is that his close friend Rajam, his idol, his hero, is mightily offended, and there is

much heart burning, sorrow and suffering. However, in the end Swami goes to the station to bid farewell to Rajam. He fails to approach him because of the crowd, he cannot talk to him but the 'crisis' in their friendship is resolved and normalcy is restored in the school-boy world as Rajam looks at him 'responsively', from the moving train.

In *The Dark Room* normalcy is disturbed by the arrival of Shanta Bai in the life of Ramani. His wife Savitri is unable to endure his liaison with another, revolts and in bitterness and frustration leaves her home and her children to commit suicide. But she is saved by a bad character and is looked after by his wife for two or three days. Savitri is unable to bear separation from her children, keeps thinking of them and ultimately returns to her house. Normalcy in domestic life thus returns, through Ramani continues his liaison with Shanta Bai. "Sufferance is the norm for an Indian housewife and this norm is resorted once again, after its momentary disturbance by Savitri's 'abnormal' revolt".³¹

The hero Krishna, *The English Teacher*, becomes the English teacher living happily with his wife, Susila and his daughter, Leela. However, this normalcy is disturbed when suddenly Susila falls ill, develops typhoid and dies, leaving her husband distracted and heart-broken. He loses all interest in life and even gives up his job. But he meets a stranger and through him is able to communicate with the spirit of dead wife. In this way Susila is re-born, spiritually resurrected, to be with him forever. In this way normalcy is restored with Krishna psychologically rejuvenated and in a position to lead normal life.

In each of the novels the normal social order is disturbed, there is conflict between the forces of order and disorder, and in the end there is a restoration of normalcy largely as a result of chance meeting with some mysterious stranger. It is not the absurd or eccentric or the evil that is re-established, but the good and the normal. There is always a renewal of life, love, beauty, peace. Despite temporary aberrations, life must go on as usual. This seems to be the message of R.K. Narayan.

6.2.4. LOVE AND SEX:

Love is also a major theme in most of the novels of Narayan & plays an important role in the social life of Malgudi. The society is acquisitive and materialistic. In the vendor of sweets, we can see Jagan love strikes at first sight. This is Shakespearian love at first sight, true and innocent. After the marriage we become passionately mad for her love and sex. In the English Teacher love is a willy nilly story. We find in the novel the parents and grand –parent’s love for the child and vice versa. But the love for which the novel is known is Krishna’s love for his wife, Sushila and vice –versa. Krishna’s love for his wife is platonic, Shakespearean and Shelleyan. This shows us “True Love”. In the Guide Raju’s love for Rosie is not true one but loves her for Passion and money. Thus he seduces Rosie, the wife of Marco who has great faith in him.

For example,

In *The English Teacher*, the true, constant love and care of Krishna for his wife is revealed in his utter anxiety for her and his untiring service to her during her illness. From dawn to dusk and from dusk onward he cares for her and serves her. All day he sits pressing down the ice bag on her forehead. He serves and nurses her wife so much night and day that his father-in-law recognizes his service when he says:

*“You have been sitting up without a break since 6 a.m. I will look after her”.*³²

*“I lost touch with the calendar. In doing the same set of things in the same place, I lost count of days. Hours flew with rapidity. The mixture once in three hours, food every two hours, but two hours and three hours with such rapidity that you never felt there was any appreciable gap between doses”.*³³

In *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Bharati’s true love for Sriram and vice versa too, their true love turned into marriage after consent of Mahatma Gandhiji in Delhi.

Even though Sriram mind disturbed by terrorism but his constant love was pure to Bharati.

"I didn't intend to if you don't want it. I knew you hate me," he said childishly.

She simply said, "why should I hate you?"

"Because I am bothering you."

"How?" she asked.

"By, by-asking you to marry me. It's wrong, perhaps wrong."

"It wouldn't be if Bapu agreed to it."

He resigned himself. "All right," he said. "as you please....."

"We shall marry," she said, "the very minute Bapu agrees." She was very considerate.

He felt it was time for him to ask again: "Do you- like me?"

"Yes, when you don't misbehave".³⁴

In *Vendor of Sweets*, Jagan loves his wife Ambika, and does not marry after her death. He tells Grace "use or no use, my wife-well, you know, I looked after her all her life".³⁵ Mali, on the other hand, believes in free love and sex. Unlike Jagan he leads a sinful sexual life with Grace. And after robbing her of her sex and her two thousand dollars, regards her of no further use, and plans to desert her. The only consolation for poor Grace is what she tells Jagan: "The only good part of it is, there is no child".³⁶

In *The Financial Expert*, there is not much sex in the novel. Dr. Pal shows to Margayya his book on sex, *Bed Life or the Science of Marital Happiness* which contains chapters like "Philosophy and the Practice of Kissing" and "The Basic

Principles of Embracing.” Later he feels an unholy thrill at the memory of Pal’s book.³⁷

6.2.5 MONEY AND PRESTIGE:

The centre of attraction of the theme in the novels of Narayan is money, if money there, automatically prestige will come as the follower of money, they are interviewed. In the Financial Expert the theme of money is discussed on a vast scale. Money has been discussed and examined in all its aspects in an epic style. It will be no exaggeration to say that no aspect of money remains untouched here in the novel. Margayya, the hero of the novel, is the doctor of money. And money is the panacea which cures all the diseases of life poverty, want and shame. Margayya looks upon this quality of money with a respect bordering on reverence:

*“It seemed to him the greatest wonder of creation. It combined in it the mystery of birth and multiplication”.*³⁸

Prestige, position and honor are to Margayya more important than money. Margayya wants to earn money to maintain all these things. He thinks that the secretary and even his peon Arul Dass have dared insult him only because he looks shabby. He thinks that his well-to-do brother looks down upon him because he is poor. Again and again he thinks of prestige whenever he talks of money, prestige is involved in it.

In *Waiting for the Mahatma*, we notice a high density of imaginary at that point in the story when Sriram attains majority and has the bank deposit transferred to his name. He is “initiated into the mysteries of banking”.³⁹ Money and mystery are words which collocate in Narayan’s thinking. To Sriram with his infantile imagination, money is only a “magic toy”. He immediately tests its magical powers by “writing off a withdrawal for two hundred and fifty rupees”. As Sriram walks out of the bank he feels he has a “high-powered talisman” in his pocket. After these initial references to money, the subject is not taken up in the novel, except in a brief flashback much later in the book, recounting how Sriram

mulched money from his money-box: “to disguise the rattling, he had muffled it with a piece of cloth”.⁴⁰

This is interesting as an anticipation of Jagan’s operations with his cash, whose sound is muffled by a folded towel laid at the bottom of the drawer. This cash includes “free cash, a sort of immaculate conception, self-generated”.⁴¹ Today its name is black money.

6.2.6 SOCIAL ISSUES:

Narayan raises in the English Teacher the social issues like the miserable condition of the hostel bathroom, the incorrect government stamped measures the joint family stem and the corrupt, good for nothing Municipal Corporation and its idle members. He deals with social problems unobtrusively, without any zeal for reforming them. He exposes the social evils good – humouredly, with a view to amuse himself and his readers.

Narayan raises one of the most important problems rampant in Indian society, the problem of dowry. The father of Jagan has demanded from the father of Ambika a dowry of five thousand rupees. Jagan is deeply in love with Ambika and fears that, in case the father of his beloved would-be wife cannot afford to pay or does not want to pay on principle the demanded money, his marriage may be cancelled. Many marriage ties in India are broken on this account.

One of the problems in India is that of the mismanagement and the corruption rampant in the bus business. Narayan mentions this malpractice among the bus conductors in alliance with the drivers at the occasion when Jagan’s wife and parents are going in an overcrowded bus to Santana Krishna temple on Badri Hill to seek blessings for removing her barrenness: “When it made this noise, it drowned the conversation of the passengers (quite fifty of them in a vehicle expected to accommodate half that number legally, some with tickets, some without, for the conductor pocketed the cash and adjusted the records accordingly, for which purpose he was constantly pulling out a pad and making entries)”,⁴²

problem of sugar crisis, Jagan is guilty of cheating the Income tax Department for having a lot of free cash in his loft for which he does not pay any tax. Narayan discusses the beggar problem also.

6.2.7 SUPERSTITIONS:

Narayan amuses us by describing some of the superstitions which are the essential part of the Indian lore. *In the English Teacher*, Sushila's mother believes that her daughter is the victim of an Evil Eye. She thinks that an evil spirit attacked her in the new house she arranges an exorcist to drive the Evil spirit away. Sushila's doctor says that when the doctors learn exorcism, they will be able to give more complete cure. The village woman touches the cheeks of the child Leela and cracks her fingers on her temple as an antidote for Evil Eye.

The Indian villages are the store house of simple superstitions. When Krishna goes to the bus stand to see his mother off, he comes across a village woman steeped in superstition. The village woman insists upon having the child lifted up and shown to her. She touches the child's cheek and cracks her fingers on her temple as an antidote for Evil Eye. Narayan, like Chaucer, gets amused and amuses the readers by finding even educated persons' superstitions. When a donkey brays, he is exulted and says:

"It is a good sign, they say, the braying of a donkey. So my request is well-timed".⁴³

To illustrate another example, that in the Bachelor of Arts, Chandran's mother, a God-fearing lady is always busy with prayer beads. She represents an orthodox and conservative society. Another custom that girls should be married before they attain puberty has been touched upon in the novel. Marriages are settled by matching the horoscopes of the boy and the girl. Chandran's horoscope does not tally with that of Malathi and so their marriage is not possible despite Chandran's fond love for Malathi and so on.

6.2.8 NATURE:

Narayan, like Wordsworth believes in pantheism. He believes that the mystery of God can be revealed to us only in the communion of nature. He believes, like Wordsworth, that nature never did betray the heart that loved her.” Here is pure pantheism.⁴⁴

In *The English Teacher*, Krishna is impressed by this view of Nature when he goes to bathe in the river. He is so much inspired by nature that he feels like writing poetry. Nature is celestial, spiritual.

*“There are subtle, invisible emotions in nature’s surroundings; with them the deepest in us merges and harmonizes. I think the highest form of joy and peace can ever comprehend”.*⁴⁵

Narayan has expressed the pantheistic view of nature. He said that there are subtle, invisible in Nature’s surroundings. He thinks that the deepest instincts of men are harmonized with Nature. He thinks that peace and joy can be found only in the communion with Nature. Nature’s surroundings are to him haven –like. Acres and acres of trees, shrubs and orchards are to him a source of constant joy. The caesarians the setting sun and the river create peace for the medium man. The medium man says that Nature’s lap belongs to eternity. Thus nature is for Narayan a major theme.

Nature is not only a background of the novels; it seems to be a character. In *Vendor of Sweets*, it influences Jagan with its mysterious and benignity. Jagan is a complex character because he is not only money minded, dishonest vendor of sweets but also a lover of nature. In beginning of the novel he stands for a moment gazing at the twinkling stars which is the Malgudian stars.

When he accompanies Chinna Dorai to a garden with a pond in it across the river, he sees the wonderful peaceful spectacle of Nature. “The birds in the trees fluttered in the sudden outbreak of noise. Frogs at the edge of the pond sprang back into the water, and Jagan’s gaze was held by the delicate tracks on the surface

left by aquatic creatures invisibly coursing”.⁴⁶ And he also believes in Nature cure, written a book on nature cure the manuscript of which is lying unprinted in the press of Natraj.

The Nature in Malgudi inspires the characters to become spiritual. Jagan in the *Vendor of Sweets* is transformed into a Sanyasi at the touch of a retreat. Savitri in *The Dark Room* becomes a different woman in the presence of the river and the ruined temple. In *The Guide*, in the presence of the Sarayu and the temple the criminal Raju is transformed into a saint Raju.

In *The English Teacher*, Krishna becomes so spiritual in the presence of Nature that he can communicate with the soul of Susila. Nature is to Krishna a haven.

*“It looked like a green haven. Acres and acres of trees, shrubs and orchards. Far off, caesarian leaves murmured”.*⁴⁷

6.2.9 GANDHIANISM / IDEALISM / POLITICS / FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND EVENTS:

Narayan was not interested in politics but he pictured Gandhianism means Gandhian policies, idealism, politics, freedom struggles and events in the only novel *Waiting for the Mahatma* and he want to insist non-violence activities of Gandhiji and in their art and ideas and suitable character portrait have presented the highlight events of freedom movement in his fiction. According to Srinath, “R.K. Narayan is a perfect Gandhian novelist because in his novel *waiting for the Mahatma* Gandhi himself in a character. But critics failed to realize that Narayan understands and defense of teaching of Gandhi went far beyond the picaresque adventures of Sriram, a nitwit who ever knew the difference between Bose and Gandhi. Narayan’s Gandhism is not limited to one single novel but pervades every page of his work. “Malgudi ins far too large to be one of Gandhiji Indian 7,00,000 villages but Narayan proves that Gandhism in a Humanism that can be practiced anywhere provided that heart be willing.

In *The Vendor of Sweets*, Jagan is a staunch follower of Gandhian principle. When Gandhi had visited Malgudi, Jagan had taken avow for spinning, which he does regularly. Gandhi had first visited Malgudi in 1937 and had addressed a vast crowd on the sands of the river. He had asked persons to do service to their motherland, to release her from the bondage of the foreign rule. Joins the national movement to violate the British rule. He believes in Gandhi's Satyagraha, his Ahimsa and Non-cooperation. He uses these principles in tackling his own household problems caused by Mali's fantastic demands. He is so much hypnotized by Charkha that he takes it even to the retreat where he settles after the renunciation. The Gandhian principle is, however, imbued with irony. Jagan though a follower of Gandhian principle, has a lot of free cash for which he does not pay income tax. He says that Gandhi never made reference to sales tax. Moreover, Gandhi has been misunderstood. Jagan's sister condemns him for following Gandhi, ignoring caste and dining with untouchables. Thus, Gandhi reigns supreme in the novel.

6.2.10. INDIANNESS: A PROJECTION OF NATIVITY IN TRUE SENSE:

Narayan's Novels, describing the Gandhian Principle, the Hindu way of life, the Indian locale, the Indian culture, traditions and customs, and the beliefs, faiths and the superstitions of Indian people. Though Narayan has preferred foreign language to Indian language, he expresses through the foreign language the Indian sensibility. The Indian atmosphere is created by mentioning Indian names like *gutka*, *jilebi*, *Mysorepak*, *uppumar*, *halwa*, *sohan papdi*, *Amrita*, *puja*, *sait*, *janma*, *dhoti*, the sacred *tulasi* and hundred other such names. Then he refers to *Kalidasa's Shakuntala*, *Valmiki's Ramayana*, *The Bhagavad Gita*, *Panchatantra*, *Vedas and Puranas*. He gives us such Sanskrit words as *Mukta-Viduma-hens* and *Viswarupa* and explains them. He gives us hundred names of gods and goddesses like *Gayatri*, *Sarawati*, *Lakshmi*, *Shiva*, *Buddha* and the religious and mythological scriptures like *The Gita*, *The Ramayana*, *The Vedas*, *The Puranas* and other such names. Then he gives us the vivid and comprehensive view of the social and economic life of India, the sweet vending, the hoarding, the evasion of

income tax, the pocketing of money by the conductors of the overcrowded buses, the begging problems, the overcrowding and then the loneliness of the houses which become the fitting abode of ghosts. The Narayan gives us the comprehensive and charming view of Indian marriages with its festivity, its tensions, its problem of dowry and the quarrels when the brides do not bring from their home solid gold waist band. All this provides a picturesque view of Indian ancient culture and modern problems. One of the axioms of Narayan criticism is his Indianness. C.D. Narasimhaiah categorically asserts, "*Few Indian Writers have been more truly Indian*".⁴⁸

6.2.10.1. THOROUGHLY INDIAN NOVELIST IN ENGLISH:

R.K. Narayan is an Indian novelist to the marrow. It is misfortune that he came to be recognized in India only after the West had given him a thumping reception. He has demonstrated the falsity of the notion that typically Indian thoughts and feelings cannot be expressed through a foreign language. It is altogether a different matter whether Narayan writes about the India he knows or the India that the foreigners want to see. He is typically Indian in his thoughts and feelings, in his scenes and backgrounds. He was a teacher of English and a journalist in the early thirties. He wrote in English without ever trying to imitate the native speakers of English.

6.2.10.2. INDIA SYMBOLISED BY MALGUDI:

Narayan's India is symbolized by Malgudi, an imaginary town and locale of his novels. Since the early 'thirties' the town has grown into a good city and gradually has added studios, hotels, a railway station and ultramodern flats in the extension area. It is a town of pariahs, potters, printers, lawyers, teachers and small and big businessmen. It has grown from a rural looking, conservative and backward town into a town of tourists' interest. Narayan is called a regional novelist because he does not want to go outside Malgudi locale. Malgudi is his Wessex. He can be compared to Hardy in this respect.

6.2.10.3. TYPICALLY, INDIAN CHARACTERS:

His characters are typically Indian- *Swami, Chandran, Krishnan, Sampath, Margayya, Raju and Mali* are Indians not only in name but also in character and spirit. They have the notions and feelings, taboos and morals of India with them. They suffer due to Indian traditions and morals. There might be a character or two assuming foreign name, e.g., Rosie, but inside them too are Indians. At one or two places Narayan has introduced some purely foreign characters, i.e., Mali goes to America for professional training and brings an American wife with him.

India's culture is very elusive and complex. It is difficult to summarize it through a few situations of characters. Narayan is neither a social critic nor a photographic artist representing the reality. His chief interest is the study of man and his predicament in this universe. Yet despite all this his characters share Indianness.

6.2.10.4. INDIAN SYMBOLS AND SCENES:

Narayan represents Indianness through his symbols too. He uses symbols which represent typical Indian culture or temperament. Temple, charkha, river, excessive credulity and faith symbolize the cultural past of India that not only survives but also shapes the new culture. Similarly, sofa set, studio, typewriter and skepticism are the specialties of new culture. The building of a railway station at Malgudi introduces the hurry and flurry of modern life into Malgudi. It was in this whirl of activities, skirmishes and clash of feelings that was caught up when Marco and Rosie alighted from the train on Malgudi platform. Raju had hectic life, first, looking after Marco and then Rosie, and eventually had no time for him, nor was he free even for a second to give second thought to what he did on the spur of the moment under circumstantial pressure. But when he was on the granite slab of the ancient shrine on the bank of Sarayu he was faced with a void tired of seclusion, eager for human contact. This idyllic atmosphere coupled with the peace and the serenity of the temple reduced Raju's life to the bare essentials: food, clothing and shelter. It is in this atmosphere of perfect leisure and calm that

he realized his life in Malgudi as a Railway Raju and Rosie's lover and promoter of her dance had been only a bubble in the sea of life.

Although an unwilling fast, yet it is through this fast that Raju emerges as different person. The fast has effected a change in his heart. He is ready to sacrifice his life for people.

6.2.10.5. INDIAN MANNERS AND TRAITS REFLECTED:

Certain other typical Indian traits are also reflected in the novels of R.K. Narayan. For example, the Indian habit of hospitality to the extent of inconveniencing the host. Vasu of *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* had almost imposed himself on Sampath the printer, much like Rosie who had just come bag and baggage to Raju seeking shelter. Raju had provided her with all comforts within his limits in the same way as Velan and other villagers had accommodated the guest, Swami and arranged for his meals. Compared with this is the emphasis in Indian culture on altruism as against selfishness. The personal and the temporal have to be sacrificed for the impersonal and the permanent. The beard, rosary, vague language and assertive attitude of Raju are representative of Indian Swamis.

6.2.10.6. SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL ASPECTS OF INDIA REFLECTED:

Beside the spiritual side of India, India's poverty and squalor, the ignorance of its people and their illiteracy are also reflected time and again in Narayan's novels. When a documentary on mosquitoes is presented to the villagers they wonder where in the world such big mosquitoes lived. The red-tapism of government officers and the unplanned scheme of life are typically Indian and are reflected in Narayan's novels. The picture of a village teacher portrayed in *The Guide* is typically Indian. Raju's father never wrapped in paper the things he sold; Raju's mother kept in a box a number of costly sarees, but never put them on except on exceptional occasions; and despite her education and co-operation from Raju-like helper and lover; Rosie was obsessed with thoughts of her husband

because she was wedded to Marco-all these show the Indianness of the novel. Even the villagers used to sit at the feet of Raju to hear stories. Being a pure artist, Narayan does not idealize the country nor does he condemn it. Temple, astrology, fate, the Gita are all referred to in *The Guide* as well as in some other novels of Narayan. He is not the tourists' India. He has not pandered to foreign sensibility and does not intend to present a picturesque India for those foreigners who take sentimental interest in this country of ancient culture. He does not indulge in self-mystification nor does justify credulousness, lethargy and inefficiency and inefficiency in the name of Indianness.

6.2.10.7. 'THE GUIDE' -A TYPICAL INDIAN NOVEL:

So *The Guide* is as much an Indian novel as Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope*. From the thematic and descriptive viewpoints and from the view of characterization, locale and philosophy it is indeed an Indian novel. Prof. Srinivasa Iyengar rightly says, "*He (R.K. Narayan) is of India, even of South India; he uses the English language much as we used to wear dhotis manufactured in Lancashire but the thoughts and feelings, the stirrings of the soul, the wayward movements of the consciousness, are all of the soil of India, recognizably autochthonous*".⁴⁹

Narayan captures not only East-West theme but also the peculiarities of India-her fauna and flora, her caste system, her social and political conditions. Under western influence, says O.P. Mathur, "he seems to ridicule the exclusive orthodoxy of Indian conservatism and is clearly sympathetic towards modernity".⁵⁰ He has portrayed typical Indian characters in *The Guide*. Velan and Raju's mother belong to the orthodox, conservative class of Indians. But Rosie and Marco are modernized Indians. Rosie, despite her desertion like Sita and her modern-type relationship with Raju, still regards Marco as her husband.

CONCLUSION:

A study of Narayan's novels reveals that he is concerned with a number of themes and ideas such as Human relationships, Aspiration, towards spiritual maturity – source of the comic, disturbance of order and subsequently restoration of Normalcy, the social life includes the family life and marriage, social issues, love and sex, money and prestige, nature, the East-west conflict, superstitions, politics, idealism, Gandhism, freedom struggle and events and finally presentation of Indian life or Indianness or treatment of Indian life in the Novel are all the subjects of the themes which were involved or inter linked to the facts of the nativity in themes or the approach of the themes. Narayan subject of the themes which was upholds the **nativism**. All these themes are pertaining to deep idea, concepts and ideologies of life. He is a pure artist No moral diagram are preached. All his views are intrinsic, duly woven in his plot construction and the art of characterization. But in one important respect he deviates from the Indian tradition. He is perhaps a moral analyst, an analyst of character and conduct, but he does not attempt to impose his views on his readers. "He is an analyst of individual feelings, emotions and actions, in an exploration of hidden human conflicts. Nowhere in his novels does he preach or pontificate in the Indian tradition. "Even while using a western art –form Narayan remains an Indian to the use. As Srinivasa Iyengar puts it we do witness in the novel, "amid all the small talk and crazed thoughts, all the comic gestures and frantic movements, the miracle of Faith enacting its own mysterious surprise in minds darkened and deadened by the galloping herds of the Sickness of modern life. From 'In my beginning is my end' to 'In my end in my beginning in a full circle', indeed and to this in the noblest tradition of Hindu philosophy".⁵¹

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CHAPTER: 7

NATIVITY IN CHARACTERS

INTRODUCTION:

Narayan has been widely acclaimed as a detached observer of life. He never seriously involves himself in the activities of his characters. However, one can't overlook his pre-occupation with the delineation of south Indian orthodox Hindus, the class and the caste to which they belong and the persons Narayan is intimately familiar with. The range of characters portrayed in his novels is a narrow circle dubbed as Malgudi which has an imprint of a conservative Hindu society, vastly changing under the impact of modernization, and yet showing the perpetuation of old social values with a little or no interest in pushing the society on its onward march. On the whole, Narayan's characters with a few exceptions have a fixed role to play with little scope for a fuller growth of their individuality. The role assigned to them seems to be pre-ordained, and they appear as helpless creatures formed by desires and toned this way and that by the caprice of fortune. Heavily burdened with the weight of customs and traditions, and therefore totally frustrated with their life and the surroundings, most of his characters run away only to return home thoroughly chastened accepting defeat in life. They simply cannot withstand the collective force of the traditional society and are forced to lead their life like "well dressed life like clay models in a show case, moving along a predetermined mechanical track".¹

Born in a conservative Hindu family, Narayan could not help portraying characters of the same class and caste of which he is a member. The Indian child of this class and caste; is introduced to the classical Indian tales, myths and Vedic poetry very early in life, in Narayan's case at his grandmother's knee, in a cosy corner of the house when the day's tasks are done and the lamps are lit. "Like the non-conformist hymns of Lawrence's childhood they become woven into man's consciousness giving an ultimate shape to his life".² It is so because from the very childhood our minds are trained to accept without surprise characters of godly or

demonic proportions with actions and reactions act in limitless worlds and progressing through and incalculable time scale.

Narayan's characters move about in a socio-cultural environment which includes economic compulsions, family and personal ties, socio-political surroundings, religious and cultural traditions, the influence of modernity on the present, and the impact of the West on the East. Narayan is rooted in the ancient Hindu religion, a religion that attaches importance to self-discipline, renunciation, incarnation, the doctrine of rebirth, the law of karma, and non-violence. An ancient myth or legend provides him to express his vision of modern life. This tendency grew more prominent as he crossed the fiftieth year of his life.

Narayan's characters are both types as well as individual. They belong to some particular type or class, but they are also individuals, with their own particular individual qualities. Thus Rosie is a butterfly type of women, a typical flirt, but she is individualised in as much as she has great concern for her husband, appreciates his generosity and longs to return to him. Natraj and Margayya are typical of their class, but they too, have their own individual qualities. In the same way Shanta Bai is an adventure, but she is skilfully differentiated from other woman of her type or class.

Such individualisation becomes possible because of Narayan's understanding of human psychology. Often, our sympathy for a character is enlisted and individuality is achieved which make him act in a particular way. Sometimes the dresses, personal appearance, likes and dislikes, of a character are directly described as is done in the case of Vasu, Margayya and others. But such set description grows rarer as the novelist's are matures. More characteristic of him is the dramatic method of character depiction. As the story progresses, the characters unfold themselves through what they do and say and thus gradually the different face is of their personality are revealed. In this way, is built up a complex, living, breathing human being. In this way has Narayan given to us a crowded gallery of the immortals of literature. It is Raju and Rosie can never be

forgotten, once we have made an acquaintance with them. Now we will discuss the how Narayan did the characterisation in his novels to support his native theme.

7.1 THREE CATEGORIES OF CHARACTERS:

Narayan's characters may well be divided into three categories. First, there are **simple characters** who can wry easily be seen through Narayan's heroes like Swami, Chandran, Krishna, Srinivas and Natraj belong to this category. They are kind and considerate, but they are also weak and hesitant. They lack self-confidence and determination and are unable to assert themselves. They are on the whole passive characters – unheroic or anti-hero who do not act, but are acted upon.

Secondly, there are the more intricate or **complex characters** such as Raju, Ramani, Mr. Sampath, Margayya and H. Vasu, the Man-Eater of Malgudi. They are mysterious and unpredictable in their ways, and so difficult to understand. They are unconsiderate and selfish in their plans and actions. Money and sex are their chief-occupations and in the pursuit of their objectives they are ready to sacrifice every other thing and every other person. Because of their obsession with sex or money or with both, they play havoc with the lives of other. They are not un-redeemed villains, they have much good in them, for they do not harm others intentionally and recognise and are repentant for their misdeeds. They are fascinating, much more fascinating, than such colourless, simple people as Sriram, Srinivas and Natraj. They have all the fascination of evil about them. They are all dynamic people, intelligent and shrewd, who make determined efforts to get their objectives. It is also to be noted that Narayan has the seeing of eye, and can distinguish between different varieties of the same characteristics, the unfaithfulness of Ramani is quite different from Mr. Sampath's neglect of his wife and children. The native shrewdness and cunning of Margayya, the financial expert is different from unscrupulous money-hunting of Mr. Sampath or Raju, the railway guide.

Thirdly, there are the old and **grotesque characters**, unusually given a minor role, but highly amusing and entertaining like Dickens, Narayan is fascinated by the old and the eccentric in human character and action and does not fail to communicate this own amusement to his readers. Such oddities and eccentricities are often exaggerated, and the result is some delightful caricature. Marco in *The Guide*, Veeraswami, the grumbler, Kailash- the drunker debauch, the adjournment lawyer etc., are all fascinating eccentrics. They may not be strictly true to life, but none would wish them away for that reason.

7.2 MIDDLE CLASS CHARACTERS:

He achieves greatness in the field of characterisation by recognising his range and working within it. He himself belonged to a middle class family of south India, he was intimately familiar with its ways, habits and aspirations, and therefore he rightly limits himself to this particular class. His canvas is a limited one and it is never overcrowded. As William Walsh points out, “his preoccupation is with the middle class, a relatively small part of an agricultural civilisation and the most conscious and anxious part of the population. Its members are neither too well off not to know the rules of financial worry nor too indigent to be brutalised by want and hunger. They may take their religion more easily than the passionately credulous poor, but even in those with a tendency towards modernity one is always aware, under the educated speech, of the profound murmur of older voices, of Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth, and the spouse of God Vishnu who was the protector of creatures”.³

7.3 THE HERO:

Members of this middle class are psychologically more active, in them consciousness is more vivid and narrowing and it is from them that Narayan chooses his heroes, modest, unself-confident heroes, it is true. They have some room for independent, critical existence; but there is always a tension between their aspirations and the family, where the women, rather than the old, represent ‘Custom and Reason’. And know what is and what is not proper. The family

indeed is the immediate context in which the novelist's sensibility operates, and his novels are remarkable for the subtlety and conviction with which family relationships are treated-that of sons and parents and brother and in the Bachelor of Arts; of husband and wife, and father and daughter in The English Teacher; of father and son is the Financial Expert; of grandmother and grandson in waiting for the Mahatma.

7.4 STRUGGLES AND ASPIRATIONS OF CHARACTERS:

It is against the presence of the town, finely and freshly evoked and amid a web of family relationships, each thread of which is finely and clearly elaborated, the Narayan's heroes engage in their characteristic struggles. The conditions of the struggle vary from novel to novel, the stress is highly particularised, the protagonist may be a student, a teacher, a Financial Expert, a fighter for emancipation. One still discerns beneath the diversity a common pattern or predicament what is so attractive about it is the charm and authenticity of its Indian colouring, what makes it immediately recognisable is that it seems to belong to a substantial human nature. The primary aim of all these characters is to achieve, in the words of Chandran in The Bachelor of Arts. "A life freed from distracting illusion and hysterics". At first the intention is obscure, buried under the habits of ordinary life, personal responsibilities and since, this is India-heavy, inherited burden. The novels plot the rise of this intention into awareness, its recognition in a crisis of consciousness and then its resolution or resolutions, since there are more often than not several mistaken or frustrated efforts at a resolution.

7.5 EDUCATION AND MATURITY OF CHARACTERS:

Thus each of the novels depicts the struggle towards maturity, the education of the central figure, who is not at all heroic, but an ordinary human being, like most of us, with common human virtues and weaknesses. As the action proceeds, he struggles to achieve maturity and each stage in this struggle is defined carefully, minutely and precisely. The impression created is that of an ordinary individual, living his humdrum day to day life, struggling with circumstances and

growing wiser-more mature through this struggle. In this way, he grows, changes psychologically and it cannot be said, as some critics have said, that Narayan's characters are flat characters, that they are not rounded, three dimensional figures.

7.6 MINOR CHARACTERS:

It is only his minor characters that are flat. They do not change and grow but even then they are delightful. "The most interesting people in his fiction are what the critic, W J Harvey calls cards, where distinguishing feature is relative changelessness, combined with a peculiar kind of freedom. For example, the adjournment lawyers, a figure that recurs in Mr. Sampath. The Man-Eater of Malgudi and the Guide and the cousin in the Sweet-Vendor are cards. Their actions are predictable but one does not tire of them because they assume new shapes, though the basic putty is the same".⁴

7.7 VILLAINS IN NOVELS:

Narayan has no heroes and no villains. His heroes are all unheroic and his villains have something good in them. There are no un-redeemed villains in his novels. No doubt, Mr. Sampath, Margayya and even Raju are not quite honest. True also that Rosie is not a very model wife. But we see them go through ups and downs of life, we see that there is a lot of good in these characters, that they are more sinned against than sinking and that they deserve our sympathy and pity. He suggests that everybody has his own virtues and vices and it would be unfair to take a superior criticising attitude towards the star-crossed heroes and heroines, who commit mistakes under the pressure of circumstances and who possess inherent goodness. Tossed this way and that under the blows of fate, they are more to be pitied than despised. Often they go down and commit sins, despite their best efforts to the contrary, as if some superior force or power was pulling them down. In this sense, in Narayan's novels destiny may be said to determine character.

7.8 CHILD CHARACTERS:

A word may also be said about Narayan's knowledge of child psychology and his portrayal of children. This is best seen in his early novels-*Swami and Friends* and *The Bachelor of Arts*. In his very first novel, Narayan has shown great penetration and skill in depicting the rainbow-world of childhood and early boyhood. There is hardly anything about child-life which has not been depicted in this novel. We are told of their hatred of Mondays, of their joys and sorrows, of their boyish enjoyment, their petty-quarrels which are soon forgotten and friendships resorted. Not only is the child world unified, but Narayan has also rendered the world and the grownups as they appear to children. As critic David Cecil points out, children are instinctive, they have strong imaginations, vivid sensations; they see life as black or white, and bigger than reality, their enemies seem demon, their friend's angels, their joys and sorrows are absolute and eternal. The children have a tendency to exaggerate and it requires great psychological insight and understanding to paint the world from a child's point of view. In this respect, Narayan is to be compared with Dickens. To Swami, Rajam appears a demi-god as steer forth appears to David. Again, Mr and Miss Mudstones are nothing short of ogres to David is immature intelligence, as is the son of the Tonga-driver to Swami.

7.9 THE SPIRIT OF HINDUISM EXHIBITED IN CHARACTERS:

"Character is the soul of tragedy" said Aristotle long ago, and this remark is applicable to the novel also. Skill in characterisation is the measure of a novelist's greatness, and in this respect R K Narayan is the greatness of the Indo-Anglican novelists.

Narayan embodies the spirit of Hinduism. According to William Walsh,

In Narayan, Hinduism appears at the natural sub-stratum of a sensibility preoccupied with individuality, with the specific, with particularization. Not that he is concerned with a mere ticked collection of particulars. Each

detail is seen and presented so as to imply an essential truth about its own nature, just as the aggregate of details is raised from a simple collection to an order or world or portrait. A detail in Narayan is not only close to the essential object but also contributes its part to a significant whole. ⁵

7.10 THE USE OF MYTH AND LEGEND TO SUPPORT THE ATTITUDE OF CHARACTERS:

Narayan does not make use of myths and legends as mere illustrations of abstract ideologies and beliefs, but to reveal the final vision of the present-day realities as visualised by him. This method links the modern with the ancient Indian tradition. In this sense, Narayan is in the line of the old Indian sages interpreting the prevailing human conditions in terms of ancient myths, legends, and fables. His view of life is expressed through rich circumstantial details. The presence of the central mythic idea never obscures the real life depicted by the author. Narayan says:

For an Indian, training in the classics begins early in life. With the impact of modern literature, we begin to look at our gods and demands, not as some remote concoctions, but as types and symbols possessing psychological validity even when seen against the contemporary background. Passing inevitably through phases of symbolic, didactic, or overdramatic writing, one arrives at a stage of valuing realism, psychological explorations, and technical virtuosity. ⁶

In his introduction to *Gods, Demons and Others* (1965), Narayan refers to the "inexhaustible vitality" of our classical mythology which is as rich and variegated as the Greek mythology. The myth is often brought in to galvanise reality, to point a moral, or to suggest a parallel. But there seems to be no desire on Narayan's part to modernise the myths so as to fit them into the contemporary scene - a desire that is evident on the part of Mulk Raj Anand - in *Gauri*, for example.

7.11 CHARACTERS BELONGS TO HINDU JOINT FAMILY:

Most protagonists of Narayan's novels belong to the Hindu joint family - *Swaminathan* (better known as *Swami*), *Chandran*, *Krishnan*, *Ramani*, *Raju*, *Sampath*, *Margayya*, *Jagan*, *Sriram*, and *Raman*. They have strong family bonds. They are deeply attached to their parents, children, and grandchildren, and so are uncles, aunts, brothers, and sisters. The individual grows in a joint family. His character is shaped or warped by the members of the family. He has to respect the decision of the family elders even in such important matters as the choice of a career or a wife.

7.12 TENDENCY OF “VARNASHRAMA” IN CHARACTERS:

The two time-honoured directives of Hindu society are *Varna* and *Ashrama*, commonly called *Varnashrama*. They regulate the social and spiritual life of an average Hindu. Even modernised Hindus, who openly reject the traditional beliefs and customs, are unconsciously guided by them. The majority of Hindus accept the manners of their caste. Many of them carry on their caste occupations. They are afraid to lose their caste. The determining factors in the Hindu marriage are caste and religion.

Despite the odds of unmatching horoscopes in *The English Teacher*, *Krishnan* loves and marries *Susila*, a girl of his caste. In *The Guide*, *Raju*'s mother seriously objects to her son's affair with *Rosie*, partly because *Rosie* is a married woman, but largely because she is a *devadasi*, a dancing girl, whose caste is not known. She cannot tolerate *Rosie*'s presence in her house and threatens to leave it. In *The Vendor of Sweets*, *Jagan* is shocked when his son *Mali* brings a half-American and half-Korean girl and intends to marry her. He cannot accept her as his daughter-in-law. He has no peace until he succeeds in booking the girl's passage to America.

In *The Painter of Signs*, when *Raman* announces his decision to marry *Daisy*, the first question his aunt puts to him is:

That girl: What is her caste? Who is she? Isn't she a Christian or something? How can you bring in a Christian? ⁷

As she shows her consternation, she drops the vessel she is holding in her hand, as if she has lost her hold on things. She has slaved a! her life to bring Raman up as her own son. All her tenderness for Raman disappears at the infringement of the socio-cultural norms fostered by her religion. For Raman, it is the end of a lifelong association. Her decision creates a family crisis. Raman cannot give up Daisy, but the aunt can give up Raman. Her darling nephew has to be deserted because of her cherished Hindu tradition. Since Raman decides to marry Daisy, his aunt decides to leave for Kashi to live and end her life there.

7.13 THE IMPACT OF HOROSCOPES ON CHARACTERS:

Horoscopes play a decisive role in the settlement of a Hindu marriage. The marriages of some of Narayan's characters suffer a serious setback on account of the horoscopes which do not match - of Krishnan in *The English Teacher* and Chandran in *The Bachelor of Arts*. Bhatnagar points out that;

Narayan has in his novels some very inclusive digs at the orthodox Hindu customs like the tallying of horoscopes, a custom which could well have prevented his own marriage with Raj am who is, alas, no more. ⁸

The priest is often bribed to find a way out, and the marriage takes place only after getting his clearance. In *The Painter of Signs*, horoscopes are not consulted, but the help of astrology is taken. The temple hermit predicts that, in Raman's relationship with Daisy, there will be trouble. At the end of the novel, Raman's plans to marry Daisy are never realised.

7.14 WOMEN CHARACTERS:

Narayan's women characters may suitably be divided into two groups or classes. First, there are typically Indian housewives, such as Krishna's wife and Savitri. They are simple, modest, gentle, loving and obedient. They are religion

and traditional in their ways. Indeed, they are the upholders of the ancient Indian way of life. Their only anxiety is the welfare of their husband and their children. They are expert in running their households economically and efficiently. As they grow old, more matured and experienced, they become more independent and assertive. Such are Raju's mother in the Guide and Krishna's mother and the mother of Chandran.

The second class of women characters are more modernised, more unconventional in their views and ways of life. They are flirts, or butterfly-type of women. They are beautiful or at least sexually fascinating. They do not care for traditional norms of virtue and chastity. Such is Rosie in The guide and Shanti and Shanta Bai, Rangi in the Man-eater of Malgudi represents a cruder type for she is professional prostitute, neither ashamed of her profession, nor trying to conceal it.

A woman's proper place in a Hindu joint family is her home and hearth. She is obliged to perform domestic duties which include cooking, housekeeping, and taking proper care of her husband and children. The proper discourse of these obligations accord her a respectable position in family and society. She must be a dutiful and loving wife, always faithfully and submissive. If her husband deviates from conjugal norms, she has to bear with them. In *The Dark Room*, Savitri is furious with herself and the helplessness of Hindu wife when her husband gets involved with "the other woman."

In the Dark Room there is marital discord, in *The English Teacher* there is a perfect marital compatibility but in *A Tiger for Malgudi* Narayan presents an ideal Hindu life when the Swami's wife pleads for the restitution of her conjugal rights;

Husband, husband, husband, I'll repeat it a thousand times and won't be stopped I now to whom I'm talking, Don' deceive me or cheat me. Others may take you for a hermit, but I know you intently; I have borne your vagaries patiently for a lifetime : your inordinate demands of food and my perpetual anxiety to see you satisfied, and my total surrender night or day when passion seized you and you displayed the indifference of a savage,

*never caring for my health or inclination, and with your crude jocularities even before the children, I shudder Come home with me, I'll accept you as you are, keep your beard and loincloth, only let me have my husband at home.*⁹

7.15 RELATIONSHIP AMONG CHARACTERS:

Relations between man and woman in India are not as free as in countries of Western civilisation. There are social and family restrictions. The lover is under the inquisitive eyes and the comments of his family, his neighbours, his relatives, his friends. Raman is indignant at his aunt who guards him sedulously as well as with the watchfulness of the Malgudians who pry into his love affair with Daisy. There is a comment on the conservative section of Malgudi:

*This was a wretched part of the town. He wondered for a moment whether he should not sell his old house and take up residence in a more civilized locality like the New Extension or leave Malgudi itself- the conservative town unused to modern life.*¹⁰

In *The English Teacher*, Krishnan goes to the railway station to receive his wife Susila and her baby, who are escorted by his father-in-law. When they arrive home in a Victoria carriage, a traditional reception is extended by Krishnan's mother before Susila and the child are allowed to step into the house. A proper ceremony awaits them at the gate.

Krishnan tells us:

My mother came down and welcomed her at the gate. She had decorated the threshold with a festoon of green mango leaves, and the floor and doorway with white floral designs. She stood in the doorway and, as soon as we got down, cried, "Let Susila and the child stay where they are". She had a pan of vermilion solution ready at hand and she circled them before the young mother and child, before allowing them to get down from the

*carriage. After that, she held out her arms, and the baby vanished in her embrace.*¹¹

Aged persons, particularly grandfathers and grandmothers, are esteemed and cared for in Hindu society. That Narayan has feeling and consideration for old age is evident from the Master's observation before he attains samadhi. In *A Tiger for Malgudi*, the Master admires Raja for his old age:

Raja, old age has come on you. Beautiful old age, when faculties are dimmed one by one, so that we may be restful, very much like extinguishing lights in a home, one by one, before one goes to sleep.

*No one relationship, human or other, or association of any kind, could last for ever. Separation is the law of life right from the mother's womb. One has to accept it if one has to live in God's plans.*¹²

Old age is characterised by nostalgia and dependence. It is perhaps more so for aged widows. Narayan's novels consider old age as the period when one harvests one's experience to replenish the lives of others. Some of his novels emphasize the fact that old age in the Hindu joint family "provides love, protection, and care to children and grandchildren, and they provide these spontaneously, like Swami's granny, Krishnan's mother, Sriram's grandmother, and Raman's aunt.

7.16 CULTURAL AMBIVALENCE IN CHARACTERS:

In *Daisy*, we meet a woman who is not only modern but also a family planning promoter with a missionary zeal. She is averse to marriage. Her parents had arranged her marriage, but she refused to go through it. She believes she is not made to lead a marital life and settle down to domesticity, and so she runs away from home. She says:

They had a shock at home when I told my people that I'd not allow anyone to inspect me as a bride and that I'd rather do the inspection of the groom!

They felt outraged and my father's younger brother - my father being too angry to speak to me- took me aside and said, Don't be mad!" Don't you know that it's not done?" I replied, "If it's not done, it's better that someone starts doing it now." I had other aims. I said I would like to work rather than be a wife. ¹³

Daisy and Raman's association for a few weeks in the propagation of the family planning programme arouses her dormant sexuality, and she carries on an affair with him without meaning to marry him.

When Raman persists,

She lays down two conditions for accepting his marriage proposal - (i) that they should have no children, and (ii) that, if by mischance, a child was born, she would give the child away to somebody and keep herself free for social work. Further, their marriage would be a "Gandharva-style marriage, as easily snapped as made".¹⁴

For good or for bad, the marriage does not take place, but Narayan has succeeded in showing the cultural ambivalence.

7.17 TYAGA AND TAPASYA: ATTRIBUTES OF CHARACTERS:

In Hindu society, renunciation and asceticism are regarded with reverence. The yogis and Sanyasi are respected because they practice the ideals of~ and tapasya. Austerity, meditation, and self-discipline are supposed to be aids to miraculous powers. As Meenakshi Mukherjee puts it:

Renunciation has always been an Indian ideal of life, be it renunciation of worldly goods and possessions, or the renunciation of selfish motives, passion and emotional bondage. Like all ideals, it is a distinctively difficult condition, attainable only by a few. ¹⁵

he goes on to add:

*The ideal of asceticism runs through Indo-Anglian fiction as a recurrent and compulsive motif. Even writers, who are seemingly indifferent to the spiritual aspects of life, have not been able to ignore it altogether, because this is a pervasive cultural ideal in India.*¹⁶

In his Introduction to *A Tiger for Malgudi*, Narayan says that:

*The terms Sanyasi, yogi or Swamiji indicate more or less the same state. A Sanyasi is one who renounces everything and undergoes a complete change of personality. Why one would become a Sanyasi is not easily answered. A personal tragedy or frustration, a deeply compelling philosophy of life, or a flash of illumination may drive one to seek a change.*¹⁷

7.18 DETACHMENT AND RENUNCIATION OF CHARACTERS:

In *The Bachelor of Arts*, Chandran's frustration in love drives him out of Malgudi. He is unable to marry the girl with whom he falls in love at first sight. Narayan says it might have been a silly infatuation." Chandran deserts his loving parents who have given him all their love, care, and savings. Chandran's detachment is "forced", and not voluntary; He moves about with a shaven head in and around Madras for eight months. He inflicts on himself and kinds of physical tortures. He calls himself a Sanyasi. His new philosophy is says Narayan,

*Love and Friendship were the varies illusions. People married because their sexual appetite had to be satisfied and there must be somebody to manage the house. There was nothing deeper than that in any man and woman relationship.*¹⁸

There is much truth in Chandran's newly-found philosophy. On his return to Malgudi, after eight months of wanderings, he settles down "to a life of quiet and sobriety." He feels that, "his greatest striving ought to be for a life freed from

distracting illusions and hysterics;" His detachment is merely a transitory phase of his life, and not renunciation. It is an escape from life and then back again into life.

7.19 PRETENCE OF SAINTHOOD BY CHARACTERS:

A real sadhu is difficult to find. In *The Guide*, even Raju is not a genuine sadhu. He pretends to be a sadhu to hide his identity. His past has been shady and he has been just released from prison. He does not want to be a holy man, but circumstances are such that sainthood is imposed on him in such a way as to leave no outlet for escape. The villagers mistake him for a saint. Their faith in him shocks Raju. He himself is responsible for letting his impersonation go on. Narayan says:

*He now saw the enormity of his own creation. He had created a giant with his puny self, a throne of authority with that slab of stone. He left his seat abruptly, as if he had been stung by a wasp.*¹⁹

Raju curses himself for having once told the villagers the story of a saint whose tapasya brought about rains in a drought-stricken land. When he reveals the truth about himself, it is too late, and nobody believes him. Ultimately, he has to undertake a fast to bring rain. He tells Velan:

*I am prepared to fast for the sake of your people and do anything if I can help this country, but it is to be done by a saint. I am no saint, Velan; I'm just an ordinary human being like anyone else.*²⁰

Although Raju pretends to be a saint, he is forced by the villagers to play the role of a real saint contrary to his wishes. Narayan writes: For the first time in his life he was making an earnest effort; for the first time he was learning the thrill of full application, outside money and love; for the first time he was doing a thing in which he was not personally interested.²¹

Raju begins as an imposter, and Narayan leaves us in doubt whether he dies as a real saint.

In *The Vendor of Sweets*, the sole mission of Jagan's life is to make money, and in this mission he succeeds remarkably well. As a follower of Mahatma Gandhi, he by his professional honesty makes a lot of money as a sweets-vendor. He is disenchanted by the conduct of Mali, his only son. Mali "imports" an outlandish girl and introduces her as his wife without marriage. He spoils the sanctity of his ancestral home when he lives in sin with her.

Jagan now realises the futility of his pursuit of money. He has been hoarding it for a son who, in his opinion, is worthless. Mali is contemptuous of the Hindu ethos and the Hindu way of life. Jagan collapses under the weight of Mali's unofficial attitude. He is disgusted with the ways of his wayward son. He therefore decides to renounce the world. He cuts himself off from paternal bonds. He says:

*Yes, yes, God knows I need a retreat. At some stage in one's life, one must uproot oneself from the accustomed surroundings and disappear so that others may continue in peace.*²²

Having thus justified himself, Jagan begins to rationalize further:

*I have probably outlived my purpose in this house. If I live for ten or fifteen years, it will have to be on a different plane. At sixty, one is reborn and enters a new Janma. That was the reason why people celebrated their sixtieth birthdays. He remembered his father and mother, his uncle and aunt, and a score of other couples, who celebrated a man's sixtieth birthday like a wedding, with pipe, drum, and feasting. People loved to celebrate one thing or another all the time. He had his fill of them, and had nothing to complain of. Mali had proved that there was no need for ceremonials, not even the business of knotting the thali around the bride's neck ... When his sixtieth birthday came, it would pass unnoticed. A widower had no right to celebrate anything. He was fit only for retirement.*²³

Mali, his son, is imprisoned for smuggling liquor, but this does not bother Jagan as he has snapped all ties with Mali and his mistress Grace. We may call it renunciation, but it is neither total nor in accordance with the Hindu view of life. He carries away the charkha with him because he is Gandhian, but his retaining of the cheque-book is evidence that his interest in materialism still persists.

On the other hand, Raman's aunt, in *The Painter of Signs*, has firm faith that

*"a visit to Kasi is the most auspicious end of one's life."*²⁴

M.K.Naik is of the opinion that

*"She certainly appears to be a more authentic candidate for renunciation than the weak and hypocritical Jagan".*²⁵

In *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Raman's aunt also leaves for Benares, and her conduct is more genuine than that of Jagan.

The essence of the Hindu ethos and way of life includes non-violence, the law of karma, the cycle of rebirth, the transmigration of the soul, and the oneness of all living things. The last word in wisdom is Vanaprastha. The theme of renunciation is shown with clarity in *A Tiger for Malgudi*. The supreme realisation comes to the Swami (or Master) after he has gone through the ordeal of hardship and tapasya. The transformation does not come all of a sudden but is slow and gradual. It may take, not one birth but several births, to become a Sanyasi. The Swami tells the tiger:

*In Bhagavad Gita, He reveals himself in a mighty terrifying form which pervades the whole universe in every form and action. Remember also He is within every one of us and we derive our strength from Him.*²⁶

7.20 GANDHISM AND CHARACTERS:

In *Waiting for the Mahatma*, sainthood transforms the lives of two lovers - Sriram and Bharati - in fact, of a whole people. In this novel, we see Mahatma

Gandhi in person staying at Nallapa's Grove in Malgudi and years later in Delhi and on the fatal day (30 January 1948) of his martyrdom. The next day (31 January 1948), he was to preside at the marriage of Sriram and Bharati.

Narayan's novel has been compared with other "Gandhi novels", like Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, K.A. Abbass's *Inguilab*, and V. Nagrajan's *Chronicles of Kedaram*. Gandhiji plays a different role in each of these five novels.

But such is not the case in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. Sriram cannot afford to neglect his personal loyalties to his grandmother and Bharati even when he is in the vortex of the terrorist movement. The progress of events is viewed through Sriram's consciousness. The apathy of the people to non-violence and satyagraha, casteless and classless society, continues as before. Somehow, Gandhi does not click with the Malgudi people, though his greatness is fully recognized. The timber merchant is shrewd enough to divide his loyalties equally between the Mahatma and the collector. Gandhi's loss does not seem to inspire Sriram except as a means to secure Bharati for his bride. Sriram remains almost untouched by the events in Calcutta and Noakhali except in so far as they affect Bharati.

7.21 PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE PROJECTED BY CHARACTERS:

Narayan's philosophy of life is not an organized system, and to base it exclusively on the cultural awareness of his women characters would be to truncate it in terms of gender discrimination. To divide Narayan's philosophy of life into that of his men characters and that of his women characters would not only be artificial and arbitrary but also uncritical: it cannot be bifurcated into two separate compartments, one insulated against the other. As K.C. Bhatnagar puts it:

Though his plots follow a formula - order, disorder, and order again - we have in his novels plenty of evidence to show (i) that life never takes a straight course, (ii) that, whatever we may wish or strive for, the final result of our efforts is unpredictable, and (iii) that, being human, we must always

*put up a good face against all his predicament and never feel aggrieved about It.*²⁷

Narayan brings out the genius of the Tamil people, their customs and traditions, as much as Raja Rao does of the Kannada people in his *Kanthapura*, as much as Bhabani Bhattacharya does of the Bengali folklore in his *To Many Hungers*, and as much as Anand does of the robust Punjabis in his *Lalu* trilogy. The *Lalu* trilogy consists of *The Village* (1939) dealing with the idyllic life of the rebel *Lalu Singh*, a farmer's son in *Mandpur*; *Across the Black Waters* (1940), a war novel dealing with the life of *Lalu* and other Indian soldiers in France who were fighting for a cause which they did not fully understand, and *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) which shows *Lalu's* return from war to lead an agrarian agitation.

CONCLUSION

Narayan's main characters are externally simple people, but they are inwardly highly versed in the Hindu way of life. They can quote endlessly from the *Ramayana* and the *Upanishads*. They pray daily to their gods. They are orthodox and vegetarian. But as R.M. Varma points out,

*"In a conflict between convention and revolt, Narayan upholds convention; between tradition and modernity, Narayan chooses tradition; between faith and reason, Narayan prefers faith to reason. The apparent conflict between faith and reason tends to sort itself out in favour of faith. To Narayan, as to most Indians, the Ganga is a symbol of India's culture".*²⁸

Narayan writes for his readers, and not for critics and research scholars. His novels represent the middle class. It satisfies him to be called social realist. He explores the darkest recesses in the minds of his characters. He investigates their psyche when it is divided against itself. He rejects sexual aberrations. He is all for leading a normal life and cherishing the traditional values. As Varma puts it:

*His fiction is India's cultural and spiritual home to which we may turn for sustenance, warmth, and peace.*²⁹

Study of Narayan's characters depicts the greatness in the field of characterisation by recognising his range of working within it middle-class character, The Hero, His struggles and aspiration, his education and maturity, Minor-characters. No unredeemed villains. The three categories, women characters, children and child psychology, types and individuals and finally the methods of character drawing are seen in the novels of R K Narayan. He is a middle class man who writes about middle class men in middle class Indian – English. Simplicity, his greatest virtue, becomes his greatest shortcoming once he steps out of the middle class world. He is proficient at animating middle class urban life in south India, but is ignorant of the lines of the rich and the rustic. He is fine at bringing out the eccentricities and vices of common men and excellent at portraying rogues because of his rogues are common men in whom the streak of roguery is more pronounced than in more people, but he is uninteresting when moulding good men and positively out of his depth with supermen. Mahatma Gandhi was superman, Sriram; the hero is a good man like that so.

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CHAPTER: 8

NATIVITY IN LANGUAGE

INTRODUCTION:

R.K.Narayan considers English as an Absolutely Swadeshi Language. *"That the country should stir itself from the spell cast on it by a foreign language is a point that anyone will readily grant, although personally I think otherwise. For me, at any rate, English is an absolutely Swadeshi language. English, of course, in a remotely horoscopic sense, is a native of England, but it enjoys by virtue of its uncanny adaptability, citizenship in every country in the world. It has sojourned in India longer than you or I and is entitled to be treated with respect. It is my hope that English will soon be classified as a non-regional Indian language".*¹

V.Y.Kantak in his admirable essay on *The Language of Indian Fiction in English* points out that our first impression of Narayan's English is that it is extremely limited. He does not seem to be interested in exploring the fuller, deeper possibilities of the language he is using. His vocabulary has always a very modest range. Word or phrase rarely glints with compression or suggested meanings. They are just their own declared selves. The sentence has a certain structural monotony. It is always the same subject-predicate-object-complement pattern with an occasional appendage of phrase or clause or an occasional inversion. It seems all bone lacking the expected amplification of flesh. He has certainly none of the graces or the dialectic power of the language spoken by native speakers of English. Nor do we discern anything like the influence of an intimate habitual contact with English literature as is the case with those writers who have had a dominant academic background. Indeed, there is plainly so little of this influence that it is as though, for Narayan, English poetry had never been read in India had never existed. In that respect, his language is extremely impoverished and limited.²

Narayan's language is very much like the language of the newspaper and the Sunday weekly and the common use an Indian makes of it for conversation

among educated Indians of different language groups. From the limited vocabulary, Narayan has fashioned for himself a kind of diction of common life for his Indian scene- a medium which is at once, casual and convincing and used with complete confidence. "It can always subtly convey the flavour of Indian speech in an Indian setting without any of the awkwardness of translation. He does not attempt to find crude equivalents for that delicious Indian vocabulary of abuse, of bawdry, of endearment, as a Mulk Raj Anand or a Khushwant Singh may do. Nor does one meet with the kind of strange construction that results in rendering, say, the North Indian idiom into literal English. Narayan has none of these bizarre effects and yet he manages to make an encounter sound authentic and Indian," as for instance, when Velan first meets Raju.³

Narayan can do without forcing the normal tone and structure of English and within the most ordinary gamut of words which retain their original lucidity and force. This has won Narayan high praise. William Walsh writes about this, "Narayan uses pure and limpid English, easy and natural in its run and tone, but always an evolved and conscious medium, without the exciting, physical energy-sometimes adventitiously injected – that marks the writing of the West Indians. Narayan's English in its structure and address, is a moderate: traditional instrument but one abstracted from the context in which it was generated the history, the social condition, the weather, the racial memory and transferred to a wholly different setting- the brutal heat and hovering vultures, flocks of brilliant glittering parrots, jackals rippling over the rubbish dumps, an utter shining clarity of light and the deadly grey of an appalling poverty. It is clear of the palpable suggestiveness, the foggy taste, the complex tang, running through every phase of our own English. Instead, it has a strange degree of translucence. Narayan's language is beautifully adapted to communicate a different, an Indian sensibility".⁴

When a more complex effect is attempted, one is not always sure that the language is equal to the task. We seem to be left in doubt now to take in what is presented, whether to respond in sympathy or in comic detachment. Now it is possible, of course, to regard this as the very effect Narayan's art aims at. William

Walsh calls it an intricate alliance of the serious and the comic, considering it as a sort of culminating point of that art. "The serious and the comic flow in and out of one another throughout in an intricate, inseparable alliance".⁵ But the mingled effect may simply be the result of the fact that the language lacks amplitude. "The same language that formerly served the comic purpose is now employed for situations which have emotional magnitude and complexity. There are scores of places in the Guide where one seems to feel this want rather keenly. Nothing happens to the language, though the narrative raises the expectation of a heightened tone".⁶

Now we will discuss the different nature of R.K.Narayan languages which he used in many novels to represent nativity.

8.1. NATURE OF LANGUAGE IN R.K. NARAYAN'S NOVELS

8.1.1 Watery and Unmetaphorical Language:

When compared to the language of other Indo-Anglian novelists such as Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, B.Rajan and Manohar Malgaonkar the language of R.K.Narayan is watery and Unmetaphorical. His language has very little ornamentation; it is suitable to the purpose and occasion. Suitability and adaptability, flexibility and aptness are the hall-mark of his language.

For example, in *The English Teacher*, Krishnan's words:

"That evening when I returned home from college the first thing I noticed was that my room looked different".⁷

8.1.2 Simplicity, brevity and Straight forwardness:

Other main features of Narayan's English are simplicity, straight-forwardness, brevity and propriety. Although impact of journalism is there on Narayan's English, yet it is not journalistic. With his limited language he is yet able to evoke through all the appearance of stillness and strangeness,

a rhythm, the common rhythm of life as it is lived in South India. It has a different colour altogether.

For example, in *Waiting for Mahatma*, the conversation between Bharati and Sriram,

“By, by-asking you to marry me. It’s wrong, perhaps wrong.”

“It wouldn’t be if Bapu agreed to it.”

He resigned himself. “All right,” he said. “as you please.....”

“We shall marry,” she said, “the very minute Bapu agrees.” She was very considerate.

He felt it was time for him to ask again: “Do you- like me?”

“Yes, when you don’t misbehave”.⁸

8.1.3 Propriety:

For the communication of Indian sensibility Narayan’s language is most suited. It is extracted from context: history, social conditions, weather, racial memory etc. he is not interested in politics or socio-economic problems of the country, but as an artist to communicate his experience of reality. He is away from the naturalistic mode of expression and photographic representation of reality. He creates fantasies and uses his language to depict his understanding of the fundamentals of life.

For example, In *Vendor of Sweets*,

One of the problems in India is that of the mismanagement and the corruption rampant in the bus business. Narayan mentions this malpractice among the bus conductors in alliance with the drivers at the occasion when Jagan’s wife and parents are going in an overcrowded bus to Santana Krishna temple on Badri Hill to seek blessings for removing her barrenness:

“When it made this noise, it drowned the conversation of the passengers (quite fifty of them in a vehicle expected to accommodate half that number legally, some with tickets, some without, for the conductor pocketed the cash and adjusted the records accordingly, for which purpose he was constantly pulling out a pad and making entries)” , problem of sugar crisis, Jagan is guilty of cheating the Income tax Department for having a lot of free cash in his loft for which he does not pay any tax. Narayan discusses the beggar problem also.⁹

8.1.4 Suitability according to characters:

He uses a language fit for his characters. Many of his heroes and heroines are common men and women. He uses a language appropriate to their standard. Unlike Mulk Raj Anand, he uses a straight forward language. He does not use slang or terms of abuse. His language is free from the mannerism of Mulk Raj Anand. His language does not differ from character to character, it is almost uniform. It however, differs when a character speaks in emotion or sentiment. On meeting Rosie for the first time, Raju started feeling excited and spoke a few sentences to Velan in appreciation of beauty romantically. But immediately Raju said, “Forgive me if you find me waxing poetic.” This explains Narayan’s awareness of the problem of language.¹⁰

Marco’s harshness to Rosie, while her passionate appeal,

*“I want to be with you. I want you to forget everything. I want you to forgive me”, he replies, “Yes, I’m trying to forget-even the earlier fact that I ever took a wife. I want to go out from here too but I want to complete my work; and I am here for that. You are free to go and do what you please”.*¹¹

8.1.5 Descriptions of Nature in Simple language:

The descriptions of nature in Narayan's language are given in a simple language. For example:

- a. *"The Sun was setting. Its tint touched the wall with pink. The tops of the coconut tree around were aflame. The bird's cries went up in a crescendo before dying down for the night. Darkness fell. Still there was no sigh of Velan or anyone."*¹²
- b. *"The river dripping away in minute dribblets made no noise. The dry leaves of the peepal tree rustled. Somewhere a jackal howled. And Raju's voice filled the night".*¹³

Narayan language has austerity. It pretends no sophistication: it does not have any literary qualities. It has a tendency to cliché and stale poeticism. Yet it has a tendency too. It lacks intensity; it is incapable of participating in the subtler function of imaginative life.

8.1.6 Journalistic Touch:

Narayan's journalistic touch can be seen in the passage such as "In spite of protestations to the contrary", "to will whom it may concern", "inside the bars or outside", "she was a sorry sight in every way", "Now I had made a mess", "go from strength to strength", "It does not matter".¹⁴

8.1.7 Use of hyperboles:

One cannot, however, accept the hyperbolic praise of certain critics who see in Narayan the quality that distinguishes Chekhovian prose. For example, Graham Greene writes: "Mr. Narayan's light, vivid style, with its sense of time passing, of the unrealized beauty of human relationships so often recalls Chekhov. Now it seems to me that Chekhov's impressionist technique is a far subtler instrument altogether. His prose, even as it makes its impact through the English translation and his carefully marshaled detail

are so implicit with deliberate indirection and symbolic reference that the similarity the critics have tried to establish is extremely superficial. All the same, Narayan's achievement means one very vital thing, namely, when it comes to art, even a modest language resource used with honesty and with confidence can work the miracle.¹⁵

Narayan uses hyperboles, for examples;

- a. Here he was in the presence of experience.
- b. This man will finish me.
- c. Here was a lifelong customer for me.
- d. He was of the stuff disciples are made of.
- e. She swayed her whole body to the rhythm for just a second, but that was sufficient to tell me what she was, the greatest dancer of the century.
- f. Rosie- like she soared. Her name became public property.

8.1.8 Occasional Poetic Touches:

Narayan language is neither sensuous nor Poetic. Yet occasionally there are poetic touches which are very transitory:

In The Guide, Raju's words towards the behavior of Marco, Rosie's husband,

"Oh monster, what do you do to her that makes her sulk like this on rising? What a treasure you have in your hand without realizing its worth like a monkey picking up a rose garland".¹⁶

8.1.9 Neologisms:

Narayan's neologisms are also suitable and suggestive. "Freeze gazing", "gold mine" (for Rosie), "dance practice", "art business" are the examples of Indian English. His language is like a one-stringed instrument.

8.2 DIALECT

Dialect is the part of language. It is nothing but dialog of characters in Novel. It is very essential media to project nativity in language. It becomes regional because of particular regional writer's work. Narayan is south Indian Novelist so, his regional language or local language becomes translate and transcribe to English language, and it is depicted in his novels or over all of his writings. Translated and transcribed local language to English reaches all over the world which made others can readable. Dialects improve local communication but languages improve world communication. Here, through English language.

Narayan, who hold a dialogical world view, being open to difference and contradiction truly portrays the increasing tide of self-consciousness. This self-conscious is never moulded or complete, but is a process of being and becoming; it is always dialogic. Dialogism is not a textual or inter-textual phenomenon, but reaches beyond the text to embrace the social world as a whole. Dialogism is created by social harmony. The novel form to be the most appropriate medium for the expression of the dialogic relations of a society, as this form has the elasticity to accommodate different styles, languages and genres.

For examples: Following words normally used in all his novels to render the impact of native things. These words are used by Narayan characters while delivering regional dialects in various contexts.

- ✓ The Gita
- ✓ Sarayu river
- ✓ The Yoga
- ✓ The Mahatma
- ✓ Bharata Natyam
- ✓ The Swamiji
- ✓ Charka
- ✓ Character Names
- ✓ The beggars

- ✓ Sanyasi
- ✓ Temples
- ✓ Antique places
- ✓ Memphi hills
- ✓ Street names
- ✓ Schools and colleges etc.,

8.3 NARAYAN'S IRONY

The linguistic features in Narayan's writing, grouped under the heads of syntax, vocabulary and imaginary. As the ironologist, Muecke, has remarked '... irony, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder and is not a quality inherent in any remark, event or situation'.¹⁷ Therefore it would be more reliable to pick out instances of irony in the novels and then try to study their structure or content or mode of presentation, which emphasizes nativity. What Narayan says about humour is equally valid for irony:

Mostly all literature becomes ironical. If irony is conterminous with literature, then the term ceases to have any practical use. It will, therefore, be necessary to approach irony in the novel with a more precise, more delimited, more tractable definition. Even in Narayan's fictions, the critic may find himself using a dozen or more terms, many of them as nebulous as 'irony' itself- tragic irony, comic irony, irony of situation, dramatic irony, philosophical irony, Socratic irony, irony of events, irony of chance, irony of character. In the *Financial Expert*, tragedy is never far from the irony. Irony of situation occurs again and again in the novels.

The ingredients or elements of irony in general, namely, the duality of meaning in irony, generally resulting from the contrast between reality and appearance. It was Walsh who said that the serious and the comic flow in and out of Narayan's novels in an intricate alliance it is difficult to separate the various elements in the novels.

Significant four types of irony are noticed in R.K.Narayan's novels by the critics, which are as follows:

Irony of Incongruity,

Dramatic Irony,

Irony of Events and

Irony of self-Betrayal

Now we will discuss one by one with appropriate examples.

8.3.1 *Irony of Incongruity*

At the basic of irony is some form of incongruity. There is some contradiction, or incompatibility, in the situation presented by the novelist. Even when the incongruity in the situation is not obvious, the author as ironist is able to make the reader see it without the author's having made any direct reference to it. Narayan brings religion and crime into the same context in *The Guide*. Raju has settled down comfortably in the temple and thinks,

Food was coming to him unasked now. If he went away somewhere else, certainly nobody was going to take the trouble. The only other place where it could happen was the prison.

To point to a resemblance between the prison and the temple is itself ironic, though Narayan has merely made a statement in a factual manner. The incongruity between speech and behavior between profession and practice is a constant source of irony in life. It is not always hypocrisy that is revealed by the contrast between speech and behavior.

8.3.2 *Dramatic Irony*

Dramatic Irony is generally regarded as the irony of the theatre. But since the novel makes considerable use of the dramatic method. In a narrow sense, this

kind of irony results from a situation in which the reader and a few privileged characters are aware of something that is known to one or more other characters. In a broader sense, there is dramatic irony whenever the observer knows already what the victim has yet to find out.

Narayan has presented a few scenes of irony in which there is a sort of 'collusion' between the author and the reader in watching the characters in the scene. For example, in Mr. Sampath,

'He is a good man.... I lived him at first sight. It is always my habit. Nobody can deceive me'.¹⁸

Here the reader has been informed in no uncertain manner that Sampath has designs on the landlord. But the landlord himself is not aware of it. This is what the landlord says about Sampath. One more example in The Guide, where villagers who are ignorant of something known to Raju and to the reader are the victims of irony in the situation. But Raju too is a victim here; since the villagers are divine him into sainthood in spite of himself. The reader knows that Raju is helpless in the situation.

8.3.3 Irony of Events

Irony of Events can have many forms. It can be an incongruity between the expectation and the event. When a character is confident and complacent with the way things go, and then some subsequent turn of events reverses or frustrates his expectation, then we have irony of events. Many of Narayan's short stories centre on an ironic development. There is a striking reference to irony of events in The Financial Expert, the priest tells Margayya about the fruits of the Puja:

"Between a man who performs them and one who doesn't, the chances are greater for the former. That's all I can say. The results are... you may have results and wish that you had failed..."¹⁹

8.3.4 Irony of self-Betrayal

Narayan's characters are engaged in the attempt to understand themselves and this gives the author several opportunities to show how often they deceive themselves or betray themselves. To start with a simple example, Chandran in *The Bachelor of Arts*, betrays himself in the following scene:

*"(Principal Brown) looked at Chandran and said that he had not bargained for this, a meeting of this dimension and importance when he succeeded to the Secretary's request. Chandran tapped the arms of his chair with his fingers, looked down and smiled, almost feeling that he had played a deep game on the Principal."*²⁰

Here Chandran is the victim of irony, and the author, the readers and Principal Brown are 'ironic observers' of Chandran's self-betrayal.

There are few novels in which ingénue irony has been so consistently used as in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. Ingénue irony is a slight modification of self-disparaging irony; in the latter, the speaker or writer, like Socrates or like Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales*, assumes such qualities as ignorance, naiveté and inability to understand, expecting the reader to penetrate the disguise. With ingénue irony there is no question of pretense or disguise. Narayan's irony too has many facets. Only when the author and the reader are on the same wave-length will the ironic resonance be made audible.

8.4 NARAYAN'S VOCABULARY

There are writers who fully exploit the immense potential of these lexical resources. But R.K.Narayan is not one of them. His vocabulary is of a piece with his syntax and shows the same simplicity and directness. Narayan prefers the familiar word to the far-fetched, which is the first in order of merit among the five rules laid down by Fowler.²¹ Narayan generally follows this rule too, though he sometimes makes use of a periphrasis for the sake of humour or irony. Narayan does not seem to be very keen on 'exploiting the richness of the English language'.

His prose has been criticized on this score by both Katak and Uma Parameswaran. The former remarks:

*"The vocabulary has a very modest range. Word or phrase rarely glints with compression or suggested meanings. They are just their declared selves."*²²

Narayan's diction should be judged by Lucidity and evocativeness: these are sufficient to give a writer's diction its particular flavour. His is mainly a comic genius and his brand of irony requires as its medium a language that appears to be purely reportorial but reveals layer after layer of suggestion and innuendo.

The names that Narayan gives to his characters are common, non-descriptive. Eleven stories begin with the name of the character. Natural names: Raju, Swami, Mali, Jagan, Vasu, Sampath, Krishna, Sriram etc. Narayan is interested in particular persons, not in types. There are a few exceptions. Savitri of The Dark Room is a symbolic name, representing the long-suffering Hindu wife. Of Bharati in Waiting for the Mahatma. Mukherjee says:

*"That the girl he has set his heart upon should be called Bharati- that is, the spirit of India- may be regarded as symbolic."*²³

Perhaps no other name but Sriram could have been appropriate for Bharati's lover, considering Gandhiji's dream of Bharat as Ram Rajya. The Man-Eater of Malgudi also has given rise to speculation about the appropriateness of the names. If the novel is an allegory of the struggle between good and evil and is a reenactment of the fight between Shiva and Bhasmasura. Then the names of the characters might have some signification related to that story. Indeed, Natraj is another name for Shiva. But Narayan does not suggest anywhere that Vasu is intended to be a symbolic name. One of the most humorous scenes in Narayan's fiction is the shooting of the dance act in Mr. Sampath:

Shiva cried, pointing at Parvati, sitting on her chair and fanning herself, “aren’t you giving her five thousand extra? Do you think I don’t know that?”

“Give me my salary; I will go”, said Shiva, descending from Kailas defiantly.

“That will be settled in a court of law...”

“What injustice is this?” cried Shiva, completely losing his head. ²⁴

The contrast between the divine name and the very human squabble is what gives the scene the brand of humour that distinguishes Narayan.

Even more strikingly, in the Painter of Signs, Raman tells his aunt about his decision to marry Daisy, and then

“The aunt dropped her vessel, as if she had lost hold on things.” ²⁵

The various objects that appear in Narayan’s novels give to Malgudi its special native flavour, which Walsh described in his monograph of 1971 as ‘the soul of the East stained by pre-1914 England’: later he describes it in a telling simile:

“The special flavour of Malgudi, a blend of Oriental and pre-1914 British, like an Edwardian mixture of sweet mangoes and malt vinegar”. ²⁶

Narayan himself has coined a name that can aptly designate the world he has created: ENGLADIA. Narayan’s Malgudi is Engladia. Even in the names of streets and buildings, there is a mingling of English and Tamil: Anderson Lane, Ellamman Street, Lawley Extension, Keelacheri, Modern Lodge and Ananda bhavan. Business houses too have given themselves English names. The reader comes across palace Talkies (which ‘simply brushed aside variety Hall’). Regal Hair-cutting Saloon and Regal Cricket Club. Scattered through Narayan’s novels

are names evocative of the west and its contacts with the East: Junior Willard bats and Kitson lamps in *The Bachelor of Arts*, Ramani's Chevrolet and Dr. Pal's Baby Austin, the Queen Anne Chair and the original Heidelberg in *Man-Eater of Malgudi*. To Narayan's heroes, there are more uses of English literature than are commonly acknowledged: Ramani finds Annandale's Dictionary and the Complete Works of Byron ideal for keeping his ties pressed. The English teacher more ingeniously finds Faine's History of English Literature a handy instrument for silencing the shrieking alarm clock.²⁷

Characters in Narayan's novels are averse to abstractions. They are at home only among concrete objects. When Swami's father gives him a test in arithmetic, this is what happens:

*Swami felt utterly helpless. If only his father would tell him whether Rama was trying to sell ripe fruits or unripe ones. Of what avail would it be to tell him afterwards? He felt strongly that the answer to this question contained the key to the whole problem.*²⁸

To swami, an apple is an abstraction; a ripe apple is more concrete. Swami's dilemma actually contains a linguistic problem: The distinction between a class and an individual item, the former being abstract in relation to the latter.

The reference to sex is inevitable in a book that centres on family planning. Narayan has not presented any salacious scene of love-making. The scene in which Raman and Daisy consummate their love is diminished in intensity and rendered innocuous by means of a clever device which converts the scene into merely an auditory experience for the reader: Narayan makes the reader listen to the scene, not see it. He describes it as heard by an eavesdropper, an urchin who brings Daisy her dinner:

(The male voice): "But you let me touch you on the river-step the other evening."

"Oh, that: That was different, it was dark there".

"I can switch off the light here too".

"And then one heard a scuffle and a struggle to reach the switch, feet and hands reaching for the switch, and a click of the switch, off. The eavesdropper applying his eye to the keyhole will see nothing.

*A stillness followed before the light went up again, the female voice saying, "if you must stay, please bring your bicycle in..."*²⁹

The scene does portray sex. But Narayan has the light turned off against himself and checks his account from sinking into pornography.

There are several other aspects of Narayan's vocabulary that deserve the scholar's attention. As with other aspects of his language, the search of the Indian influence on his vocabulary can be interesting. Narayan has not only used words like tiffin, brinjal and plantain (words which Khushwant Singh objected to), but also created English compound words to designate the various objects used in an Indian home: well-pot, sitting-plank, dining leaf, rice-cake, upper cloth, sacred thread. Established English words have been adapted to the Indian context, particularly in a religious sense: ablutions, prostration, circumambulation, merit (the last word used earlier by Kipling in his story 'The Miracle of Puran Bhagat'). Narayan is not free from the Indian middle-class habit of using clichés: after Swaminathan, on the very first page of *Swami and Friends*, "*shuddered at the very thought of school*",³⁰ characters in Narayan's novels have continued to 'shudder at the thought' of various complications in life. Characters adjourn to a place, rather than from his novels clichés in sufficient number to compile a little glossary. But this is not a major detraction from the merit of his work.

Another minor aspect of his prose is his use of adjectives. It has been said that the adjective is the enemy of the noun. It is the inexperienced writer who piles adjective upon adjective to make his sentence long as well as high sounding. Narayan stands at the opposite extreme. In describing his characters, he is content to use a very small number of adjectives. He uses a few stock adjectives to

describe the man who comes in the way of the hero's progress in life: wizened, gaunt and cadaverous are among them. The priest in *The Financial Expert* is "a cadaverous man, burnt by the sun".³¹ Cadaverous here might have additional significance for Margayya, whose forefathers were corpse-bearers. Teachers are almost always 'wizened old men' in the novels. The Head Master of the Board high school is described thus:

*"The wizened spectacled man was a repulsive creature, with his screeching voice."*³²

Narayan's use of this style must have derived from and places him in the lineage of English humorists, which is good enough to picturise the sense of nativity.

8.5 NARAYAN'S SYNTACTICAL FEATURES OF PROSE

Narayan was aware of the charms of grandiloquent writing, and his early efforts at writing reveal that he too was at first tempted to follow the examples of the great stylists of literature. Narayan admits that in his early days he was also drawn towards abstractions, but managed to resist their siren voice:

*"I could not really say repentance is admitted and his soul gains a release. It emerges and fills the space between the stars and he hears clearly the music of the spheres... what did it all mean? I don't know".*³³

Narayan realized that a writer's style is not something that he adds adventitiously to the subject matter. It has to be part of his perception, inseparable from his vision of the world. Style is not the 'dress of thought', an extraneous apparel that is used to invest a given thought. Style is rather like the complexion that responds to and reflects the processes within. Narayan's style defines and is in turn defined by the world he creates. It was chosen for him as soon as he chose his theme and his manner and his matter are inseparably integrated. Narayan arrived at a manner of writing that would closely conform to Hazlitt's idea of a 'familiar style': the writer "trims his sentences to an accepted syntactical pattern, subject and predicate with

the modification of clause and phrase, filling up the common ellipses of the spoken word". He didn't want language to draw attention to it and exist independently of the theme. His language is therefore unmannered, artless, unaffected. Narayan does not use complicated sentence patterns.

The difference between the fancied and the real is the stuff of comedy. Narayan repeatedly uses this kind of Parthian thrust: in Narayan's sentences, it is very often the tail that wags the dog. One of the linguistic manifestations of Narayan's characteristic irony and humour. It should not be a matter of regret that Narayan has chosen to write simple unadorned sentences rather than sonorous long periods. In preferring this style, he is one with modern novelists who try to present an informal, 'living', style without artificial elegance or 'literariness'.

The use of connectives like 'moreover', 'therefore', 'besides', 'then' and 'likewise', by Narayan can give the reader a clue to the cohesion in the sentences and thereby the coherence in the writer's thought. Narayan hardly ever uses conjunctions of causality. His world is made up of 'and' and 'then', not of 'because' and 'therefore'.

The presentation of dialogue is one of the most important techniques in creating the impression of reality. The author withdraws and the reader is face to face with the characters, watching them act their parts before him as on a stage. Here the novel, therefore, comes closest to drama. There are pages in *The Bachelor of Arts* that look like scenes of a play, with no authorial comment and not even verbs of attribution connecting the spoken words to the speakers:

Here is one of many examples in the novels:

He asked: "Mother, do you like the girl?"

"Yes, she is good-looking".

"Is her voice all right? Does she talk all right?"

"She talks quite well".

“Does she talk intelligently?”

“Oh, yes. But she spoke very little before me. She was shy before her future mother-in-law”.

“What class is she reading in, Mother?”

“Sixth Form”.

“Is she a good student?”

“Her mother says that she is very good in her class”.

“Her father says that she plays very well on the veena. It seems she can also sing very well... mother, her name is?” he knew it very well, but loved to hear it again.

“Sushila”, Mother said. ³⁴

One of the secrets of Narayan's success is the easy flow and aptness of his dialogue. Encounters between characters are dramatized; and in a novelist like Narayan whose concern is with human relationships, conversation can be a vital means of presenting the theme.

It is a fact that deserves to be repeated and retained in the mind that dialogue in the Indian novel in English cannot attempt to reflect real speech, because real speech does not exist. Most of the characters in Narayan's novels speak Tamil. Yet the dialogue should not appear to have been translated from a Tamil original. Narayan must have realized the absurdity of trying to make characters like Jagan or Raju speak in the latest British or American slang (which, anyway, is already old-fashioned by the time it reaches India), or in a hypothetical Indian English dialect. So he makes his characters speak in a simple, straightforward, natural style. He does not try introduce Indianness artificially by using swear-words or local idiom, like “Are you talking true talk?” or “eating the air” or “eater of my salt”. Sriram's granny in *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Margayya's

clients from the village and the tea-shop owner in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* speak English that is grammatical, simple, not “vernacularized”. This is Narayan’s convention and has to be accepted as such.

Within these limits Narayan tries to produce some conformity between speech and character. In most of his novels, Narayan presents an ‘unself-confident hero’ (the phrase was used by Walsh) and an assertive strongman who leads him by the nose. Although Narayan cannot make use of this linguistic device like singular and plural form to show us the power-relationship in Ramani’s house, he leaves the reader in no doubt as to Savitri’s position in the household.

Narayan made frequent use of free indirect speech the best known term, apart from ‘direct speech’ and ‘indirect speech’, is ‘free indirect speech’ (a translation of style indirect libre) of this type in his early novels. There is an example in the very first chapter of *Swami and Friends*. Ebenezer was still describing the Nativity of Christ, though the school term was nearly over. The Head Master demanded an explanation:

*“Ebenezer could not think of anything to say. He made a bare escape by hinting that particular day of the week, he usually devoted to a rambling revision. Oh, no: He was not as far behind as that. He was in the proximity of the Last supper.”*³⁵

Another aspect of Narayan’s is to what is called ‘Indian English’. One does not find in Narayan the kind of ‘pan-Indian’ sentences that Varma has collected in his study of English in India: sentences like

If it will rain this evening, we will not go out.

If he would have worked hard, he would have passed the examination.

My brother has taught at this institute two years ago.

*Why your friend has not come to-day?*³⁶

Occasionally Narayan uses question-tags in a manner that may sound strange to the ears of a native,

Yet it is a place that attacks the heart, doesn't it? ³⁷

This is not what you seek to achieve, do you? ³⁸

There are occasionally sentences that, without departing from British syntax, sound Indian:

"I will never show my face there again" said Singh. ³⁹

And the slightly more deviant

"Challenge is challenge, go on". ⁴⁰

And the pronouncedly deviant

"Whose master is who?" Rajan Iyer asked. ⁴¹

Notwithstanding these instances, one may say that Narayan's English is not Indianised in the sense that Anand's is. True, there are sentences in his books that one often hears among Indian speakers of English. For

What if?

Who asked you to go? (meaning 'why did you go?')

He abused them and their genealogy unreservedly.

How to do it? ⁴²

But there is no conscious experimentation in his writing. As Mukherjee has said:

"Narayan never deliberately attempts to be Indian, but because he deals with convincing human beings in authentic situations and records their responses honestly and because these human beings happen to be Indians, he succeeds in achieving that difficult task:

writing in a genuinely Indian way without being self-conscious about it."⁴³

His English was moulded entirely by his reading; other Indian writers have had the benefit of a British education or a sojourn in an English-speaking country. In Narayan's case this was no disadvantage and English readers have found in Narayan's writing a freedom from the 'fogginess' of much British writing. In an excellent simile Srinivasa Iyengar has crisply described Narayan's style:

*He uses the English language much as we used to wear dhotis made in Lancashire—but the thought and feelings, the stirrings of the soul; the wayward movements of consciousness are all of the soil of India, recognizably autochthonous.*⁴⁴

That must remain the last word on this aspect of Narayan's style.

Many of his character's lean on or derive strength from proverbs and quotations from the scriptures in their daily lives. The fluctuations in the fortunes of Jagan are paralleled by and reflected in his dependence on the Bhagavat Gita. This is hinted at by his cousin:

*As long as Mali's blue airmail letters had been the theme, the Gita had receded into the back-ground. Now it was coming back, which showed that Jagan was becoming mentally disturbed again.*⁴⁵

8.6 NARAYAN'S USE OF IMAGERY

Imagery is an expected element in poetry, whereas in prose it is incidental.

According to Vallins:

*"One of the main differences between prose and poetry lies precisely here—that in prose imagery holds a subordinate place."*⁴⁶

Narayan, who, according to most critics, does not make use of imagery in his novels. Mukherjee has categorically stated:

“The authenticity of his style cannot be judged from the quality of his imagery for the simple reason that imagery for the simple reason that imagery is not the vehicle of his perception.”⁴⁷

Imagery in Narayan's novels is usually illustrative or decorative, sometimes evocative, hardly ever emotive. Narayan's images do not make the reader pause or start, or tease him out of thought.

As Raban has said about prose fiction in general,

“Narayan's imagery operates “as a half hidden undercurrent, something of which we are only sporadically aware”.”⁴⁸

Narayan's imagery mainly takes the form of the simile, an explicit comparison. To take one of the earliest examples in Narayan's writing,

“Sarayu glistening like a silver belt across the North”.”⁴⁹

The comparison is between Sarayu, which is the 'tenor' and the belt, which is the 'vehicle'. The 'ground' of the comparison is the shape and the sparkle. In a simile the comparison is explicitly stated, usually by means of 'like' and 'as'; some of Narayan's similes are introduced by means of the conjunctive phrase, 'as if', or by using the comparative degree of the adjective. In a metaphor the tenor and the vehicle are fused.

Narayan's imagination to a rapturous description of his married life and the reader finds several striking images strewn over the pages of the book. In his later novels, however, Narayan shade the cloak of the romantic, and deals with realistic themes with the detachment of an ironist. Imagery in the later novels is, therefore, more simple and down-to-earth. Generalizations on Narayan's imagery based on The English Teacher alone are bound to be misleading. His imagery must be studied in relation to those novels in which he writes as a detached, amused observer of human beings playing their roles in society and getting involved in the criss-cross of human relationships. What Narayan's typical similes do is to evoke a

particular response from the reader by introducing an element of surprise or of exaggeration.

The forester in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* is described thus:

*This thin cadaverous man, whose neck shot straight out of his khaki like a thin cylindrical water-pipe, was tough.*⁵⁰

One of the sources providing vehicles for Narayan's imagery is modern science: this is surprising since Narayan himself seems to have been "absolutely non-mechanical". Even in a single word Narayan sometimes.

The largest number of similes and metaphors in Narayan's novels and short stories are drawn from animal and plant life. Birds represent two qualities: freedom and companionship. Narayan's similes with birds as the vehicle express these two ideas. He compares children to birds in beautiful simile. In Indian literature, birds are primarily symbols of companionship. In fact the first lines of *The Ramayana* were composed by Valmiki on seeing the male of a pair of krouncha birds falling down shot by a hunter's arrow. In *My Days*, Narayan writes about the couple as bird-like couple, with whom he stayed while serving as a teacher in Chennapatna.

Narayan's basic theme, in all his novels, is human relationships. This theme is presented through several images from animal life.

8.7 NARAYAN'S IDIOMS

The definition of good English varies not only from century to century but also from place to place. R. K. Narayan has evolved almost a native variety of English. Of course, Narayan avoided reading to avoid the influence. But he couldn't escape the influence of our mythology, culture and philosophy in 'The Man-Eater of Malgudi' and 'A Tiger for Malgudi'. The idioms related to Indian eatables, festivals (eg- 'salting and pickling', 'fire eyed') are sure to add to the

colours of India. Among the big trios R.K.Narayan's role in making English an "Indian" language is remarkable.

While translating 'fool's paradise' into Kannada we can't literally translate as 'moorkhara swarga'.. because in native tongue the parallel idiom in use may be contextually 'Ram rajya', 'tirukana kanasu', 'hagaluganasu', or 'moorkhara sante'. In the same way 'going to the dogs'. Some idioms we can't translate but, a transcreation would be very convincing. Here nativity, traditions all count. Every idiom is nourished in its centuries old culture and traditions. The innovative ways of exploring the frontiers of human experience provide umpteen numbers of opportunities in language experiments to a writer who unfolds the vagaries of life around him in an inimitable style of his own. Expressions find new dimensions to suit the peculiarities that spin around the given circumstances. The uncommon usages drenched in the local dialect pave way for a writer to skilfully weave a plot in an idiomatic language which is directly influenced by the language he is associated in and around the milieu he is brought up. New coinages are to be substituted to fit in its ambit the vast scope of ever creative and cognitive boundaries. As the problems in the given set up never remain the same and as the multiplicity in a complex social scene increases, the horizon for expression widens and consequently new, unseen areas are to be traced and treasured in a new, idiomatic language as the existing language in its limited compass, may not suffice to translate the scintillating thoughts of the over-sensuous writer like R. K. Narayan. Replenishing, restructuring language process has to overtake the commonest usages around. To understand a writer, one has to be familiar with the social background he has come across. The reader will be ill-equipped.

The writer accustomed to the native influence may find it difficult to transcreate the similar in an alien language. At best he may hover around the local coinage and find ways to robe it in another language. The native speakers of England use idiomatic language which we may not understand in all its totality. R. K. Narayan uses English of his own zone to suit the requirements while depicting a scene. The genuine problem for any foreigner is to imbibe the true hidden shades

of meaning. However, a person masters himself in a different language he cannot achieve perfection like a native speaker. R.K. Narayan's English has some tinge of Kannada and Tamil, the two languages he was familiar with. So, the idiomatic use of his English is not exactly like that of a writer of English origin.

So many idioms like - time-killers, paying for, blinded by, homesick, prying eyes, trying times, stood arrested, which are used often in everyday conversation are not found in the dictionaries.

Idioms are the life and spirit of a language. In RKN what I found is idioms have the smell of native soil and at the same time there are plenty of typical English idioms like willy-nilly, rocked with, at a loss, with an air of, point-blank, egg on, etc. We can go through few examples for usage of idioms by R.K.Narayan in his novels.

- To turn the horse into a bullock⁵¹
- It was one more stick to beat the daughter-in-law with⁵²
- Now Margayya's blood was stirred⁵³
- With little shivers of joy going down his spine⁵⁴
- let every true son of his true father prove it⁵⁵
- Peasant was somewhat cowed by⁵⁶
- Some devil was wagging his tongue within my skull⁵⁷

With the examples of Narayan's novels, it is clear that as every religion, every region has its own culture and dialect, every family, each age, profession also has its own idioms. Meenakshi Mukheijee rightly said, "R. K. Narayan's novels are satisfyingly Indian perhaps because they are so authentically South Indian."⁵⁸

CONCLUSION:

Narayan is remarkable not only for his outstanding and grand qualities of humour, descriptive beauty and characterization, but also for his simple and easy language and unaffected and elegant prose style. He has used the language of the common man in his novels. His sentence patterns are conventional and easy to

grasp without having any ambiguity or far-fetchedness. He uses appropriate and suitable words conveying the desired sense in a most straight forward manner. Unlike some other Indo- English writers like Mulk Raj Anand, he keeps his language free from Hindustani words and phrases. He is not in the habit of using these words and phrases in his narrative and dialogues. His sentences are simple and natural; they are never complicated in structure or ambiguous or obscure in meaning.

Thus all these qualities have made his style impressive, effective and forceful. He insists on keeping his language free from ornamentation but if sometimes he happens to use similes, he makes them very effective though simple, apt though precise. Narayan as a novelist is also a commentator of the broad tendencies of his society and age. According to C. Paul Verghese “He follows the tradition of story-telling as it existed in ancient India, but adopts his form and style from the west.” ⁵⁹

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CHAPTER: 9

NATIVITY IN NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

INTRODUCTION:

R.K. Narayan regarded as one of the “Big three”¹ among the Indian novelists in English has been justly admired for his remarkable gift for telling stories, for portraying memorably people of small oddities and eccentricities, and for his humour. Haydn Moore Williams makes the following interesting observation on Narayan: “R.K. Narayan always has a good story to tell, like the bazaar story – teller of immemorial tradition. George Steiner, writing of the decline of story – telling in the modern novel, says that few of our modern idols ... could have kept a railway carriage entertained on a long journey. Narayan certainly could.”² To tell a story engaging in no mean gift for a novelist. However, there are other aspects of Narayan’s work such as his artistic integrity, his themes, his narrative art and craftsmanship, and his moral vision presented through the conic mode. Every one of them deserves to be studied separately with reference to his individual novels as well as his total corpus. As yet it would seem that there have not been given the attention and emphasis they deserve, although the critical attention gives to Narayan’s works cannot be maid to be negligible.

Short stories are used as samples of powerful narrative techniques by some novelists like Graham Greene and Ernest Hemingway. Their novels are different from short stories not only in length but in treatment too. It also requires the art of putting ideas into fewer words with pithy precise effect. The minimalism and brief telling notes are also typical of the short stories. All these qualities are found in Narayan. Narayan’s stories are rooted in his own country, the specific locale is Malgudi in the South Indian state of Karnataka, which is his native land and its culture is his own too. “Simple but fascinating plot, lively characterization, gentle irony coupled with humour, strict economy of narration and beautiful simplicity of language are some of the most distinguishing features of his short stories”³. The same can be said about his novels easily.

R.K. Narayan represents the typical Indian scenes in his novels as well as in his short stories; but he is quite different from Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao in that his writings avoid the over bearing serious mood in representing these scenes. In all his writings he uses a mixture of gentle irony and humour, warmth and sympathy, quiet realism and fantasy. Narayan never seems to touch the deeper and darker aspects of life. He represents his characters with a touch of humour and irony. Like other Indian writers, Narayan also uses ancient classic lore in both short stories and novels, which we treat as native aspects. In spite of his apparent-bare simplicity, he rises above the risk of shallowness because of his empathy which may be lightly represented but is deeply felt. Narayan stresses more on the message to his readers. He hints at hidden human emotions ever while he appears to depict action through direct and simple narrative. His terms of reference are the Indian archetypical narratives. No other Indian writer has used these terms so perfectly and so lucidly. In his own words, "After all, for any short story writer (Indian), the prototype still inevitably remains to be our own epics and the mythological stories".⁴ Narayan adopted his form and style from the West but his ideas and thoughts are his own. A blending of East and West can be found in his novels. Now we will discuss the narrative techniques which he was adopted in his novels.

9.1 A TRADITIONAL STORY TELLER:

Narayan follows the Indian tradition of story telling Narayan in a story nothing less and seldom more. What Somerset Maugham has said about the novel in general, applies very well to the novel of R.K. Narayan, according to Somerset Maugham, "a novel in to be read with enjoyment. If it does not give that, it is worthless. It should have a widely interesting theme. The story should be coherent and persuasive, it should have a beginning, middle and an end and the end should be the natural consequence of the beginning. The episodes should have probability and should not only develop the theme, but grow out of the story. The creatures of the novelist's invention should be observed with individuality and their actions should proceed from their characters."⁵

The novel in a western art –form, but Narayan follows the Indian tradition of story – telling, “His plots are this and there is nothing spectacular or distinctive about them. There are seldom any subs – plots. But it has what E.M. Forster calls ‘the primitive power of keeping the reader in suspense and playing on his curiosity’.⁶ A serious shortcoming in his art in that in seven of the ten novels the plot breaks midway, never quite managing to resolve the incongruence between realism and fantasy which are its main components”. But like the traditional Indian story – teller Narayan does not care for all this. Considered from the artistic points of view his plots are thin, loose and episodic. “Like the traditional, story –teller, Narayan has an easy flow of words, speaks at a basic level, and needs an essential receptivity from his audience. Narayan certainly entertains but not at a rib, rollicking pace. On the other hand, the laughter he evokes is not recorded laughter, but genuine and simple laughter. And like the traditional story-teller, Narayan instruct in a mild, general way. However, he does not have the force of the typical Indian story – teller’s resources – the epic tales and epic heroes. Except in *Gods, Demons* and other stories, no serious use is made in his novels of ancient Hindu Mythology, religion or epics, though he himself says at one place, “*you can’t write a novel without Krishna, Ganesha, Hanuman, Astrologers, Pundits and Devadasis*”.

All his novels, except the *Guide*, are in straightforward narrations, uncomplicated by chronological disjointedness or multi-points of view. The flashbacks in the *in the sweet-vendor* and *Mr. Sampath* are clear and involve no Joycean acrobatics, while the chronological sequence in *The Guide*, though slightly more difficult to tabulate, is also simple enough. The point of view adopted in the various novels is similar.

9.2. NARAYAN’S NARRATORS:

Wayne Booth classifies narrators into three main types – implied author, undramatized narrators and dramatized narrators and further divides the last group into observers and narrator- agents. He defines narrator-agents. He defines

narrator-agents as there “Who produce some measurable effect on the course of events”.⁷ Narayan has narrator agents in the *Man-Eater of Malgudi* and Mr. Sampath, Srinivas in *Mr. Sampath* and Nataraj in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* are characters who help us understand the main character through their comments.

Through his narrator – agents, Narayan gives us his affirmation of middle class life. As Mark Schorer says a novelist expresses his values and his attitudes towards the world by the device of point of view. “By making Srinivas and Nataraj not only withstand the onslaught of the eccentric and irrational Sampath and Vasu, but also by making them return to their old routine after the storm, Narayan is expressing his faith in the predictable and relatively none world of the common man”.⁸

In six other novels – *Swami and Friends*, *the Dark Room*, *Bachelor of Arts*, *The Financial Expert*, *Waiting for the Mahatma* and *The Sweet Vendor* – there is ‘indirect presentation’ to use Percy Lubbock’s term. Lubbock mentions that one of the effective types of presentation is to have the narration in the third – person where, though the author does not delve into the sub-conscious or unconscious of his characters, the action is unfolded as seen by or happenings to the main characters.⁹ In *the English Teacher* the narrator is himself the protagonist. First person narration usually gives a certain measure of authenticity to an experience, but the authenticity of *The English Teacher* stems from the deeper source of autobiography. However, this autobiographical quality is the reason for the failure of one of the major scenes in the novel-the scene in which Sushila contracts typhoid.

9.3. LOGICAL PROGRESSION:

According to Paul Verghese, “Narayan’s is in the simplest form of prose fiction – the story which records a succession of events. There is no hiatus between character and plot; both are inseparably knit together. The qualities the novelist attributes to these characters determine the action, and the action in turn progressively changes the characters and thus the story is carried forward to the

end. In other words, as a good story-teller, Narayan sees to it that his story has a beginning, middle and an end. The end of his novel is a solution to the problem which sets the events moving; the end achieves that completeness towards which the action has been moving and beyond which the action cannot progress. This end very often consists either in a balance of forces and counterforces or in death or both".¹⁰

That character influences events creates difficulties and later the equilibrium is restored, is evident from *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*. When Vasu and the printer meet, the complexion of their encounter is immediately determined. The action is not going by the changing tension between them and by a few acts of intervention on the part of the other figures. And the balance of all the forces within the novel creates and moulds the plot. There is no external framework, no mere mechanical plot; all in character and at the same time action. There are comic elements included to give relief and an additional emphasis on action and to serve as a sub-plot without being one.

"In all his novels except *The English Teacher*, *The Guide* and *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, Narayan is the omniscient author writing in the third person and thus following the traditional and conventional mode of narration. In *The English Teacher*, the story is told in the first person; Krishna the hero of the novel himself is the narrator. The purpose and effect of narration demand this technique, for the story tells the reader about Krishna's psychical contact with the spirit of his deceased wife and the psychological change which this contact involves, and which enables him to solve his other problems. In *The Guide*, Narayan deviates from the traditional mode of narration; part of the story is told by the author and part in the first person by the hero himself. This is certainly an improvement in Narayan's narrative technique, here however it is necessitated by the nature of the story. The novel begins with the release of Raju from prison. Whatever happens to Raju after his release is told by the narrator whereas whatever had happened to Raju before he was imprisoned is told in series of flashbacks in Raju's own words and finally in the form of a confession to Velan who has come to think of him as a

saint. The effect of this technique is to make the figure of the hero sharper and real than the other characters. Also, Raju in making a confession characterizes himself by what he reports and how he reports it. The impression that the reader gets is that Raju's Character develops because of certain events and the events in turn change his character till he finally finds himself a saint, willy-nilly, fasting to induce rain for the drought-affected village in response to the expectations of the crowd of admirers and worshippers. In other words, character and action develop simultaneously and both influence each other.

Narayan's purpose is to entertain, to amuse his readers by telling them an interesting story which does not necessitate any great effort on their part. He does not preach or moralise. Though there is an analysis of human feelings, emotions and motions, there is no probing into the sub-conscious and the unconscious as in the case with a modern novelist. In short, Narayan is a story-teller, nothing less and seldom more.

In the novels of Narayan without exception it is the man or woman of ordinary abilities rather than the extraordinary person that seeks to realize some or the other ambition fails or achieves a measure of success in society which is more traditional than modern. Against the background of a changing Indian society, which is reflected in the imaginary city of Malgudi, Narayan weaves his human comedy. Over the years, Malgudi experiences some swift changes, the impact of which is reflected on the traditional Indian Society with its centuries – old culture, customs, beliefs and superstitions. As Graham Greene comments "the life of Malgudi never ruffled by politics proceeds in exactly the same way as it has done for centuries and the juxtaposition of the age-old convention and the modern character provides much of the comedy. Because of the upheaval and replacement of the traditional values of the western and modern civilization, the various human situations depicted in the novels border on the tragic-comic. But ultimately, the tradition and the traditional values triumph. The modernity touches only the fringes of the society and is never very real and does not touch the core. After the

conflict, characters manage to return to the real and solid world of Malgudi, and to a life free from “*distracting illusions and hysterics*”.¹¹

Narayan renders into modern fiction various myths and legends drawn from the classical Indian traditional literature, epics and tales such as the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata, Jataka tales and the Panchatantra, the world famous and internationally known collection of animal stories. Taken from these various traditional sources the myths and legends are improved and improvised to suit the modern times and contemporary situation. Through these stories Narayan tries to present a view of life and a moral vision in terms of the comic mode, though never didactic or instructive anywhere. In the world of George woodcock: “*The ancient Indian myths which Narayan began to read within his middle years are not merely plots for films: his novels recreate them*”.¹² Therefore one can say that Narayan’s view of life is essentially Indian and that his novels offer a recreation of the traditional imagination as it acts upon the individual consciousness within the contemporary society.

Narayan is a writer with a full commitment to certain spiritual and religious ideas with Indian are normally familiar¹³ and he has been able to penetrate into the core of Indian life without being hampered by problems of regionalism, religion, caste and class with which an Indian writer has to come to grips. What is characteristically great about him is that he has been able to capture the essence that is Indian.¹⁴

CONCLUSION:

Narayan has expressed his story in a very entertaining way which has amused the readers. There has been such great contribution or efforts on the part of the readers. Narayan does neither preach nor does he moralise. Though, there has been an analysis of human feelings emotions and motives, there has been no probing into the subconscious and the conscious.

A detailed introduction of the Indian Art of narration in given, also conflicts that plays as important part in the story of the novels in beautifully dealt. When one considers from the artistic point of view his plots are thin, loose and episodic. "Line traditional story-teller, Narayan has an easy flow of words, speaks at a basic level and needs attention from his audience." Thus no wonder Narayan in story-teller, nothing less and seldom more.

It also requires the art of putting ideas into fewer words with pithy precise effect. The minimalism and brief telling notes are also typical of the short stories. All these qualities are found in Narayan. Narayan's stories are rooted in his own country, the specific locale is Malgudi in the South Indian state of Karnataka, which is his native land and its culture is his own too.

He hints at hidden human emotions ever while he appears to depict action through direct and simple narrative. His terms of reference are the Indian archetypical narratives. No other Indian writer has used these terms so perfectly and so lucidly. In his own words, "After all, for any short story writer (Indian), the prototype still inevitably remains to be our own epics and the mythological stories"¹⁵ Narayan adopted his form and style from the West but his ideas and thoughts are his own. A blending of East and West can be found in his novels.

Venugopal says, "They rather end the O' Henry way, with a sudden reversal of situationa feature decidedly a strong point of the journalistic tradition"¹⁶. Prof. P.S. Sundaram says, "Narayan's books spring from the mud and rivers of Malgudi. The scene is Malgudi, but the play is a human not merely an Indian drama"¹⁷.

R.K. Narayan expresses his views through the depiction of the images of India. R.K. Narayan's Malgudi represents a complex miniature of the variegated panorama of India, throbbing with the varied human samples that dot the typological landscape of India. He combines old and new traditions through the landscape and ethos of Malgudi. In Malgudi lies his greatest strength. The very ordinariness of the Malgudi landscape and its populace proves its claim to a type

base. In one of his interviews to the Indian Express, A Peep into R.K. Narayan's Mind (March 29, 1961) he said, "when art is used as vehicle for political propaganda, the mood of comedy, the sensitivity of atmosphere, the probing psychological factors, the crisis in the individual soul and its resolution and above all the detached observation which constitutes the stuff of fiction is forced into the background".¹⁸ R.K. Narayan's Malgudi is not a place in reality but an experience of the soil and soul of India.

R.K. Narayan closely and clearly observed life with a sense of humour blended with irony and satire. For this quality Raja Rao calls R.K. Narayan a true 'Upasaka'.¹⁹ Raja Rao says, "Unless the author becomes an 'Upasaka' and enjoys himself in himself (which is Rasa) the eternality of the sound (Sabda) will not manifest itself and so you cannot communicate either and the word is nothing but a cacophony".²⁰ Narayan's use of the English language is a perfect setting to his themes and techniques. As Iyengar says, "*He wields so difficult and „alien“ a language like English with masterful ease and conveys the subtlest shades of feeling and thought*".²¹ He uses simple and pure English avoiding the complicated adjectives and metaphors. So his tone is natural and easy to understand. "His ultimate success is the clever blend of Indian words interspersed with the regular narrative without creating any jarring effect".²² He uses the English language but represents the feelings, thoughts and ideas of India, especially South India. He uses this language as we use "dhoty manufactured in Lancashire".²³ Although this dhoty is manufactured in foreign lands even then it still remains Desi.

William Walsh writes, "The Mysore of his personal life, the Malgudi of his novelist's life, becomes an intense and brilliant image of India itself. What happens in India happens in Malgudi and whatever happens in Malgudi happens everywhere".²⁴ R.K. Narayan himself called the hero of the novels and short stories 'a modern unknown warrior', 'who is the middle class common man'. He always picked his heroes from the middle class milieu.

Narayan is a natural visionary. His creative vision is assimilated from his native culture, tradition and values of life. The Indian tradition is the frame of reference to which Narayan is constantly drawn for the nourishment of his art. Without such a strong referential base writer cannot make a creative contribution honestly. R.K. Narayan worked as a creative artist for over four decades, drawing his strength from the various sources of Indianness. Narayan's view of life and world of values are basically native and essentially Indian. R.K. Narayan had the capability to keep his vision of life strong over a long period of time. Such a long-term sustainability is not possible for every writer. His writings, which were written over five decades even today, prove themselves true to life. This is perhaps so because his beliefs and opinions are not based on any rigid rules of writing. R.K. Narayan never behaved like a satirist mocking at the society nor did he ever try to moralize and propagandize like a Pope or a bishop. The 'sensitivity composition'²⁵ of R.K. Narayan has been remarked upon.

Through the character in the novel *Vendor of Sweets* Narayan represents the Hindu values of life, which can never be changed with time. He does not only represent the bright aspect of the Hindu way of life but the dark side is also represented minutely. In this novel R.K. Narayan proves that to discover the truth of any person we have to search deeply into his weaknesses and shortcomings as well as his virtues. This is not easily done because truth is hidden behind the mist of daily action. Narayan's technique is enriched with the world myths of *Bhasmasura*, *Kubera* and *Midas* etc. So his novels become more powerful and the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity becomes evidenced.

Narayan's writings are impressive because he uses the Malgudi motif to represent real values of life. He presents the people of Malgudi as the role models for the entire world. Narayan is neither a social nor a religious reformer but he communicates his moral vision very skillfully through his novels by accepting life in its totality. He is easily comparable to Shakespeare in his humane and comprehensive world vision. However, Narayan avoids the Shakespearean moulds of tragic grandeur in his narrative.

In Guide R. K. Narayan experiments with a new technique of telling a story. He uses both current narrative and flashback technique in juxtaposition by alternatively describing the incidents of the present life of Raju as they actually take place and the incidents of his early life as they are being related by him to Velan. This method provokes the curiosity of the reader.

The secret of R.K. Narayan's great success and high distinction lies in the complete aesthetic satisfaction which he provides to the readers. He interprets Indian life purely from the 'art for art's sake' point of view, maintaining complete objectivity and perfect impartiality. He represents the people as they are without any personal bias. There also we can see consequent changes in the Indian life patterns as depicted in the novels with the passage of time. R.K. Narayan's work maintains its artistic value and wide appeal over the long span of his literary career. One can see that the evocative prose and descriptive techniques support the narrative creating insulation against harshness of thought word or action.

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CHAPTER: 10

CONCLUSION

Looking at various representations of regionality observed in Narayan, he attempted to depict the indigenous nature of a nation and its cultural heritage. He has preferred to draw the selected region which symbolize and define the nativity in general. The majority of his novels can be read as postcolonial texts. Post coloniality in the literature showed its live appeal to construct and modify the indigenous nature of a nation and its regions. This literary artist has tried to locate native culture through his fabricated mythical plots to fortify the idea of nation and nationalism. His representation of the nativity does not merely appreciate the indigenous virtues, but also define certain weaknesses located in it since past. His effort is to remind its inhabitants, where do they stand and what the predetermined aims at shaping the ideal nation were. The thematic factors like colonial alienation, exploitation, injustice and revival of original culture, etc. interwoven by the novelists explore certain virtues and vices prevailing in its existing culture. The ultimate aim of this literary artist is to recover the value based culture by projecting native aspects.

The geographical sketches of Malgudi region respectively represent chiefly social and cultural scenario of contemporary phase. Narayan's Malgudi delineates urban as well as rural image of India, Narayan has confessed that his Malgudi is imaginative land and has no connection with any real place. Though, scholars and critics have tried to search this region and offer it various names like Lalgudi or Yadvagiri, but all such attempts proved futile in course of time. Narayan indirectly suggested once that he was fully familiar with South Indian people and its culture. Hence, Malgudi stands for a symbolic portrait of South India, although it cannot be viewed as a mere meticulous graphical sketch of this region, but can be viewed through general impressions of whole India. Malgudi and its historic importance can be appropriated to many such places in India and its religious and cultural identity defines one common image of India. The chief tone reflected in Narayan's fictional world is mythical truth located in the Holy Scriptures. His favour for

Brahminic culture has been criticized often, but with that he could succeed in depicting the contemporary status of Indianness or Nativism 'India is a land of jugglers and hypocrite monks and saints' is colonial belief which has been transformed by Narayan in its absolute reality by viewing that so called fraud saints can also serve humanity and perform sacrifices to save its people. The colonial dominance over English education is strictly responded by Narayan when he could view that it can produce mere mechanical man. Narayan shows that here people respect the traditions as tradition bound people feel safety and do not think of crossing certain boundaries established for centuries. Though not all, but certain traditions like marriage ceremony, performance of Yagna and Puja, offerings to Gods and Goddesses, celebration of religious festivals and following the religious norms, etc. support and manage community standards as well as strengthen the social harmony. Such traditions prevent certain nuisances which corrupt and damage its societal frame. On the contrary Narayan has also portrayed some rigid and evil traditions to highlight weak spots sited in Indian culture and civilization. Narayan shows his favour for Ayurvedic treatment guided by the great Indian Rishis. Through the preaching from the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, Narayan approaches the philosophical inquiry into culture to define the essence of the historic past and its significance. It does not mean that Narayan has attachment with only what went before. In fact, he has inserted the past's trail to manage the present. He has woven together the cultural set up of the East and the West to explain the influential state of global development. The Malgudi milieu merges the ancient with modern social and cultural scenario. Narayan emphasizes that colonial hegemony has restricted the native progress to a greater extent. The indigenous people are conscious enough towards changing values of modernity, but they are not ready to leave the tradition aside. They sometimes show their compromising attitude to be adjusted with recent changes.

Narayan had attempted to awaken native spirit through their artistic intellect. As stated earlier in the thesis, he was the products of the first half of the

20th century, when colonial hegemony had its grip over the whole nation. Narayan remained a witness to colonial governance in the form of native colonization. Hence, colonial abandonment and restructuring of original culture was their prime concern. The wind of change had left its influence over his creativity. To him the construction of the nation and the preservation of its age-old values remained the chief deliberation. He tried to revive the cultural scenario of native land. They depicted the regional culture, especially either of imagined or real land symbolizing the image of the nation in general. Regionality amalgamated into nationality ultimately represents the overall image of indigenous consciousness. During the transitional phase, Narayan remained social reformer without advocating any movement. He visualized Gandhian perspectives in his novels. Indianness has been woven in such a way to his novels that it defines the authentic model of country life. He had been considered regional novelists for introducing the regionality which actually signifies the connotations as nation, native or motherland in general. Hence, not only claims the individual image of any single region or state, but the whole nation in general. Though, the imagined region by him cannot be viewed as a full version or authentic image of India as a nation, but at least offer a recognizable image of Indianness. Malgudi, the southern region has its own religious, political, social or educational set up. Even traditional and cultural trends, seems quite natural. In all the aspects of regionality his commons appeal of indigenous spirits of country life. The life portrayed in it represents the colonial and post-colonial phase of indigenous land.

Narayan portray the domestic world of Indian life. His major focus is familial ties which supports and unites them to survive the societal harmony. The various relationships like father-son, husband-wife, lover-beloved, mother-son, mother-daughter relationship, etc. have been depicted with a view to highlight family values and its significance. People have due reverence for domestic ties established since centuries. Some of them show their hatred and tried to resist the age-old traditions, but could not thrive. Societal frame has two folded aspects. Sometimes they weaken the progressing form or prove advantageous. They

develop either positive or negative attitude in one way or the other. The following of traditional path without crossing its boundaries offers them safety and security. They of course are fully known with the fact that whatever applied or practiced ever since the past is not all good, but the absence of social support places them in a wretched predicament. The characters like *Savitri*, *Chandran*, *Sampath*, *Krishna*, *Raju*, *Srinivas*, *Jagan*, *Rosie*, react towards certain evils, but apart from some, most of them could not succeed in their anticipated goal. Some of them are strained to compromise with the contemporary stage and return ultimately under the shelter of orthodox set-up. They could at least challenge the existed status of society and sow the seeds to initiate the reform in upcoming stage. Narayan has made effort to retain the moral values, removal of social evils and superstitions, and rectifying the order of gender equality without disturbing the indigenous form of Indianness further.

While surveying certain primary biographical factors like the birth, family environment, educational status, ambiance or creative excellence, etc. in Narayan is the regional perspectives through his fictions, he portray the nation in its harmonized state embodying the native culture and its inherent nature. The aim depicting the realistic representation of the motherland. He has tried to characterize the norms and ideals preached and practiced in India since ages. In this study, I would say that Narayan was a individual talent as creator to show his excellent artistic style, language, and broad humanistic vision. His appeal does not seem confined to only particular region, but seems to move towards universality. His selection of the particular locale leads the reader to promote the status of our nation and its social panorama globally.

I analyzed various literary texts wrote by the authors in question along with critical discourses about him to elaborately discuss the concepts and ideas. The first chapter summarizes the concepts of region, nativity and nation, India as nation and framing of Indian nationalism, the significance and sources of rationality along with nature and scope of Indian Literature. The second chapter summarizes the review of literature, one of the early steps in planning a research

work is to review research done previously in the particular area of interest and relevant area qualitative analysis of this earlier research gives an indication for further study. As per my knowledge are concerns so for not less than 125 research works has been undertaken by many individuals and various educational institutions on topics like comparative study with many regional writers, idiomatic usage, women characters, imaginary town, mythology, nature, child psychology, orthodox behavior, Gandhian philosophy, sainthood, cultured, tradition, language etc. as a result of this review of literature I came to conclusion that no specific study on Nativity is concern is not at all undertaken. The third chapter focus on his birth, parentage, native place, his childhood, school and college days, higher studies, and his professional careers and also it depicts how Narayan became or situation made him to full time writer and also ups and downs he faced in his life time. R.K. Narayan was contributed much more to Indian English literature, he wrote 15 novels, 51 short stories, epics retold, memories etc., he is the most artistic of the Indian writers, his sole aim being to give aesthetic satisfaction and not to use his art a medium of propaganda or to serve some social purpose. He was certainly the most unpretentious and accessible of writers. He was also a writer's writer and has fans and imitators in unexpected corners of the world. The fourth chapter focus on the definitions and concepts of Nativity in various fields, therefore it suggests a fresh line to approach nativity in R.K.Narayan's novels, and it also helps to evolve some of the features of the Nativism. This fifth chapter concentrates on R. K. Narayan's fictions that reflect native land to elaborate on the representations of nativity. It analyzes the varied forms of imaginary Malgudi and shows how he is able to transform a particular limited place into a symbol of native land and its life. Though fictitious, yet Narayan's native land of experience represents South Indian culture, Hence, the historical outline of this region is also incorporated in the chapter. The study of characters, the customs, beliefs, superstitions, social evils, socio-cultural life, natural calamity, freedom movement, language, style and life philosophy, etc. included in this chapter to define the native land dimensions of native consciousness reflected in Narayan's creative world.

If one reads Narayan's novel, it may be tempted to dismiss it as a satirical sketch. Most of the meaning comes from understatement and ironic contrast. Irony in technique and realism in theme go together and in this process, the character loses much of his grotesque potential and emerges at the end with an enriched awareness of the situation in life. This is what we notice in his novels. Likewise, the situations we come across in his Novels could only be Indian. They are Indian in the sense, the themes and the episodes we notice, for instance in *Emma* or *The Old Man and the Sea* are either typically English or American. However, it is uncritical to limit their appeal, to limit the distinct flavor of Indian writing. For, the heroes of the novels, inspite of their names and nationality are fundamentally human beings and what they experience and achieve in the Indian context has a wider significance.

Narayan's characters move about in a socio-cultural environment which includes economic compulsions, family and personal ties, socio-political surroundings, religious and cultural traditions, the influence of modernity on the present, and the impact of the West on the East. Narayan is rooted in the ancient Hindu religion, a religion that attaches importance to self-discipline, renunciation, incamation, the doctrine of rebirth, the law of karma, and non-violence. An ancient myth or legend provides him to express his vision of modem life. This tendency grew more prominent as he crossed the fiftieth year of his life.

Narayan is remarkable not only for his outstanding and grand qualities of humour, descriptive beauty and characterization, but also for his simple and easy language and unaffected and elegant prose style. He has used the language of the common man in his novels. His sentence patterns are conventional and easy to grasp without having any ambiguity or far-fetchedness. He uses appropriate and suitable words conveying the desired sense in a most straight forward manner. His sentences are simple and natural; they are never complicated in structure or ambiguous or obscure in meaning.

Thus all these qualities have made his style impressive, effective and forceful. He insists on keeping his language free from ornamentation but if sometimes he happens to use similes, he makes them very effective though simple, apt though precise.

The secret of R.K. Narayan's great success and high distinction lies in the complete aesthetic satisfaction which he provides to the readers. He interprets Indian life purely from the 'art for art's sake' point of view, maintaining complete objectivity and perfect impartiality. He represents the people as they are without any personal bias. There also we can see consequent changes in the Indian life patterns as depicted in the novels with the passage of time. R.K. Narayan's work maintains its artistic value and wide appeal over the long span of his literary career. One can see that the evocative prose and descriptive techniques support the narrative creating insulation against harshness of thought word or action.

The rereading and reinterpreting of Narayan's novels with multiple approaches will certainly invite various issues to generate new knowledge. The reassessment of Narayan's fictional world will offer new perspectives in the realm of literary criticism. His creativity cannot be restricted under a narrow phase. One can also observe the facet of timelessness already woven within his entire imaginative frame.

Without advocating ideals or movements, Narayan has reflected upon and presented the symbolic representations of certain social and literary movements. The overall orientation of the novelist seems to be towards an identical direction. Representing postcolonial perspectives in his fictional world, Narayan has sought the various themes based on social reality and interpreted the social scenario realistically. His fictional universe can also be studied in context to social and cultural movements conducted in India since past to present times.

R. K. Narayan remained one of the three leading figures of Indian writing in English, along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. Narayan has portrayed the contemporary Indian life, traditions and culture in their vivid and realistic forms.

In his fictitious Malgudi milieu, Narayan could favour the indigenous culture and disapprove certain limits enforced by colonial rule. He has also traced the socio-political changes of British and post-independent phase in his novels. Narayan, a true artist pursues the art for art's sake principle, yet the overall impression of his creativity indirectly confirms that he writes with a purpose. His prime concern is not to preach any philosophical code directly, yet remains successful in depicting certain life values through his comic vision.

While portraying the socio-cultural and political set-up of his region, he seems to contemplate over the traditional culture, incorporating various themes like the human relationship, religious conventions and superstitions, natural disaster, colonial suppression and social evils along with the Gandhian bearings. He reacts and support the native and foreign aspects of his cultures in a comparable mode through his fictional universe. Narayan's is a fashionable, Narayan renders an authentic impression through his command over simple and concrete language. Narayan pays more attention to intellect than emotion. Narayan focuses not just on local and national, but also on international cultural dimensions. Hence, Narayan's region would move from local to international. His aim at depicting the symbolic form of India as a nation through widening the regional boundaries into a national one. He portrays the region as a metaphor for India, and seem to engage with the postcolonial dimensions of the nation.

Narayan has shown his genuine concern for the nation by microcosmic explorations of individual feelings and experience in the form of a novel. The majority of his novels reveal his varied anxiety over national fate. This kind of the concern seems to be articulated with a political conflict. He has visualized Malgudi as the traditional image of India. To some of the contemporary readers, Narayan's approach often seems erroneous as an expression of an outdated upper-caste Hindu-centered version of Indianness particularly a Tamil Brahmin perspective and hence, cannot be accepted as a national metanarrative. Owing to such limitation it fails to address the multiplicity of discourses that have constituted India. Of course, Narayan's Malgudi cannot be a real replica of the

nation, but at least it defines certain native dimensions of the nation symbolically which cannot be denied. Malgudi is an episteme which incorporates various ways of perceiving India as mythological and spiritual, social and psychological which often seems to be matched together to formulate its typical cultural geography. This imaginative region seems far more than its physical setting. It remains a versatile and intermediary site. It becomes an interface between old and contemporary conceptions. Malgudi a semi-urban town has been portrayed from varying angles through which Narayan also suggests the alternative ways of reading places.

Native region represented by him offers the portrayal of social, religious, political scenario of the contemporary nation. His representations of native region indicate that they are more literary and cultural ones than merely geographical areas. To uphold indigenous cultural identity, the betterment of societal, political and religious frame, the removal of inequality, evil conventions and superstitions, etc. seems his chief concern. Of course only literary representations of Narayan do not capture the wide range of complexities and dimensions of native region and nation, but offer a useful way of engaging with these multifaceted issues.

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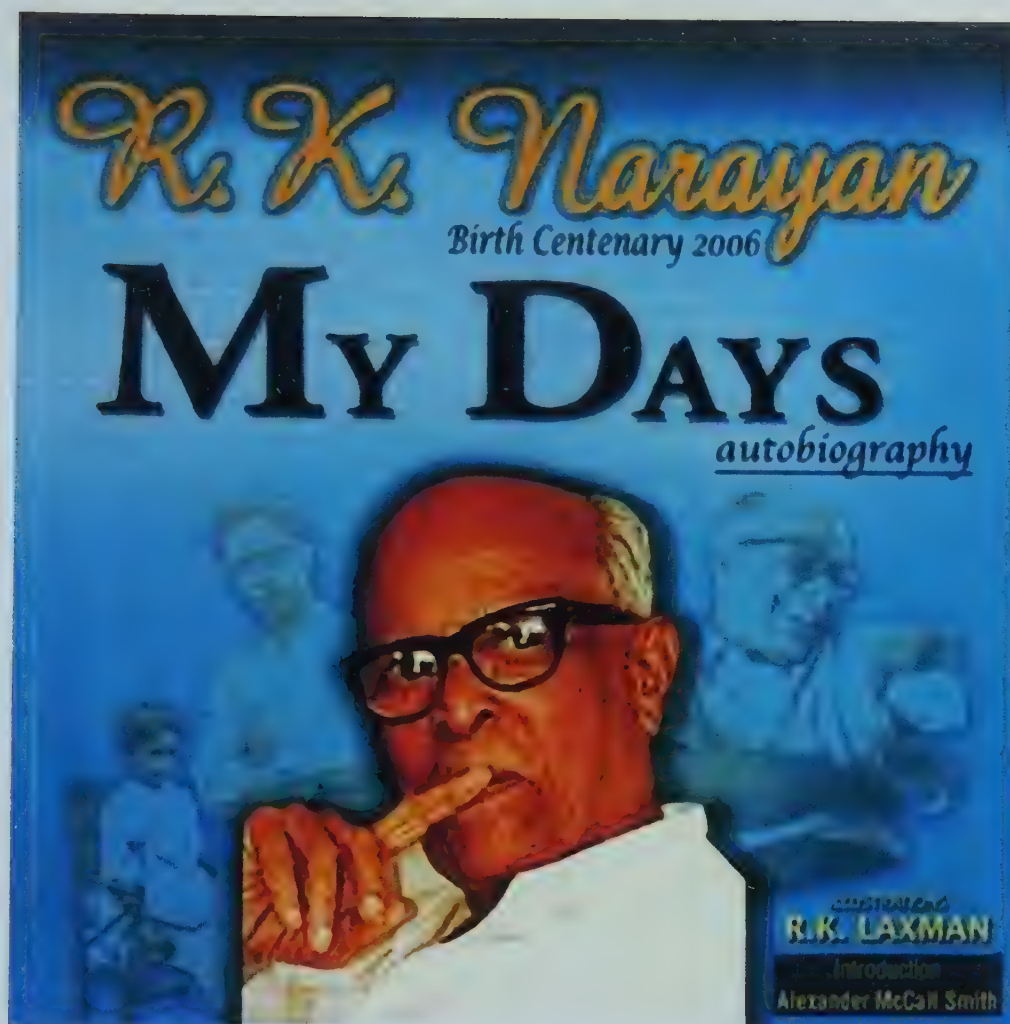
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